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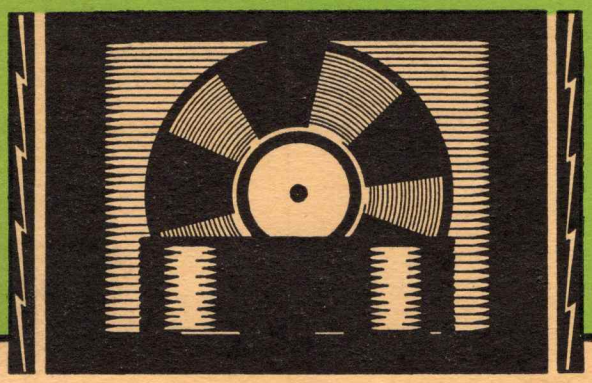

RECORDS RADIO

An Interview with Lauritz Melchior, *The Editor* 3
Behind the Metropolitan Broadcasts, *Lawrence Abbott* 5
The Tragedy of Alexander Glazounoff, *William Kozlenko* 8
The Permanent Chopin, *Philip Barr* 11
The Music Shelf 14
Correspondence 15
Radio Highlights 17
Record Notes and Reviews 18
In the Popular Vein, *Van* 28
Swing Music Notes, *Enzo Archetti* 29
Radio Dial

EDITED BY PETER HUGH REED

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The American Music Lover

A REVIEW FOR THE MODERN HOME

MAY 1936

Volume II, No. I

EDITORIAL

In the review of music, repetitions of facts are requisite to the promotion of interest and also to understanding and esteem. For true music comprehension as well as appreciation can only be advanced by reiteration and consistent reminders of certain facts regarding music and likewise interpretation.

Since THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER is chiefly concerned with the development of wider music appreciation in the home, and an honest and fearless survey of the material designed primarily for it, the reviews which appear in this journal are written with the above purposes always in mind. Hence, if any reader thinks that we remind him unnecessarily from time to time of certain data regarding music which have been previously set before him, we ask him to take into consideration the importance of the above viewpoint — and also the fact that there may be many who are not as enlightened in these matters as he.

The reviewer can never be remiss in his efforts to develop music appreciation, nor can he be sure how many uninformed readers will peruse his copy. A review — in our estimation — which avoids the presentation of some essential facts regarding the music is usually worthless in the advancement of music interest or the development of music appreciation.

Two diverse personalities, Ottorino Respighi and Bernard Van Dieren, each occupying an important place in modern music passed away this month. Of the two, Respighi was obviously the more famous, but Van Dieren

(*Continued on Page* 16)

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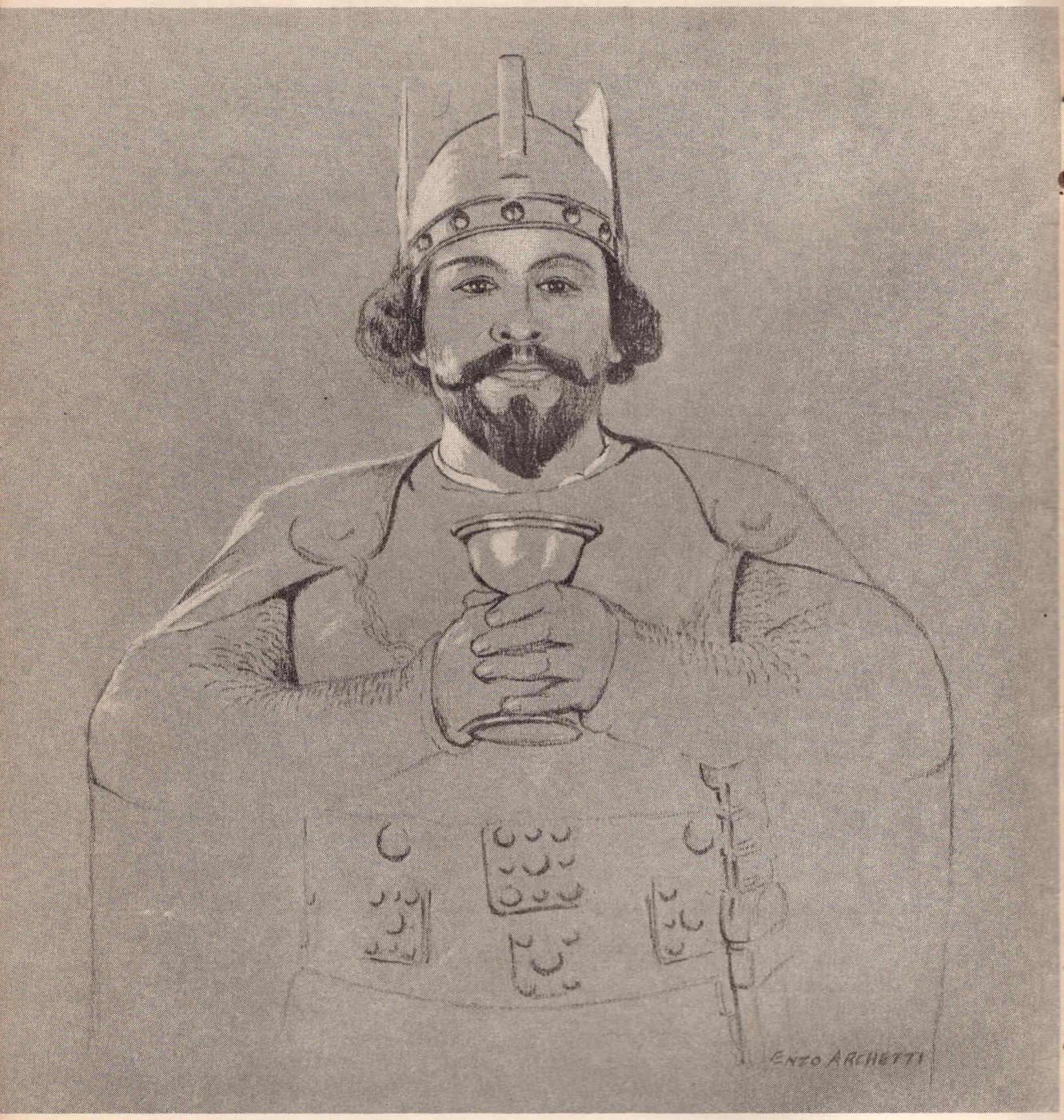


LAURITZ MELCHIOR, the eminent Danish tenor . . . . as Tristan

Melchior Talks About Recordings and Opera Roles

In an Especial Interview with the Editor

IT was glad tidings that our friend, Lauritz Melchior, imparted to us just prior to his sojourn for England in the middle of April.

"I expect to record the complete second act of *Tristan and Isolde* with Mme. Flagstad this summer in Europe," he said. "Already arrangements have been made. The recording most probably will be done in Vienna, in which event Alexander Kipnis will undoubtedly be the *King Marke.*"

Who Brangane or the conductor will be, Mr. Melchior did not know, nor would he venture to predict. In lieu of the fact that Bruno Walter accomplished such a brilliant orchestral performance in the recent recording of the first act of *Die Walkuere* (veritably the most satisfying so far on records), let us hope that he will be entrusted with the leadership of the orchestra in this most important, eventual recording.

Ever since Kirsten Flagstad, the gloriously opulent Norwegian soprano, sang her first Isolde two years ago at the Metropolitan Opera House with Mr. Melchior as Tristan, music lovers have been fervently hoping that these two highly gifted singers would be permitted to record their unparalleled performances for posterity — and of course for the more immediate reiterant edification and delight of those existing who keenly admire this great music drama of Richard Wagner. That wish may seem to some to smack of greed, but to those who have heard the fervent-voiced Isolde of Flagstad and the deeply impressive Tristan of Melchoir — such a wish is understandable; for the performances of these two artists in this opera are a splendidly united achievement in the art of comprehensive interpretation. True — we have the Bayreuth recording of *Tristan and Isolde,* which contains the major portion of the opera, but this, it must be admitted, boasts neither the ideal cast nor such highly gifted interpreters performing in their prime as would be the above artists at this time. And since all recording is handed down to posterity — such matters as the transmission of a Wagnerian music drama into wax might better be arranged with a greater acumen and foresight — employing only the outstanding artists of the day, while still in command of their fullest vocal resources. Such recordings as these would then become historical documents of a more consummate worth.

Mr. Melchior's accomplishments as an interpreter of Tristan are the result of an intensified association with the role. Since his first appearance as Tristan in Barcelona in 1929, he has sung the role 107 times to date — under the direction of 22 different conductors including Bodansky, Furtwaengler, Beecham and Toscanini. It is interesting to know that Mr. Toscanini first introduced Melchior to and coached him in this role.

Melchior's schooling in the Wagnerian traditions were originally begun back in the early 1920's, under Frau Anna Bahr-Meldenberg, a famous Bayreuth Isolde; and, later, this tutelage was continued in Bayreuth under Cosima and Siegfried Wagner, wife and son of the renowned composer. His first Wagnerian role at Bayreuth was Siegmund — a part to which he is deeply attached.

"I always derive a great thrill out of the part of Siegmund, and particularly from the music allotted to him in the first act of *Die Walkuere,*" he confessed to us. "The recording of this act was a most pleasurable experience for me, not alone because of my fondness for the role and the music, but because of my association with Lotte Lehmann, who — in my estimation — is always one of the most inspiring artists with whom it has been my privilege to sing. Bruno Walter was so patient and so helpful to us both, when he might well have been the opposite, for both Lotte and I were surrounded by screens, to facilitate acoustics, with only a small apperture through which to watch his baton.

"Siegmund, in my estimation, is a most human and likeable character. When he enters Hunding's hut, he is a depressed man, hunted and despised, without friends or weapons. Gradually, through the love of a woman, however, he acquires a new lease on life, and a sword to protect himself. When the promised weapon is discovered and withdrawn from the tree, he is truly a man reborn — ready to fight the whole universe to protect his honor and Sieglinde."

Speaking of the interpretation of characters in line with Siegmund, Mr. Melchior confided to us that he always thought "it easier for an artist on the stage to make the most of a part which is human; it is extremely difficult to translate the behaviour of mythical personages into that of human beings."

Perhaps no one has lived more in the spirit of Wagnerian heroism and tradition in a single decade than Mr. Melchior. In that time, he told us, he has sung in more than 568 Wagnerian performances. Besides 107 Tristans, he has sung Siegmund nearly 100 times, Siegfried in the opera of that name 110 times, Siegfried in *Gotterdammerung* 60 times, Parsifal 43 times, Tannhauser in the Paris version of that opera 50 times, and in the old version 60 times.

In his approach to the role of Tristan, Mr. Melchior stated he has always considered the part from its musical rather than from its dramatic aspects.

"No one will ever appear as the ideal physical Tristan for everyone," he said. "And since Wagner has made his music so expressive emotionally, I think it better to express the emotion of Tristan through the music and not through hampering and superfluous acting. For actual singing, there is nothing in all Wagner that is more emotionally uplifting and more deeply stirring than the love-duet in the second act of *Tristan and Isolde*. It is for the actual singing that I love this part of the opera best, and for the dramatic opportunities that I like the last act best.

"Speaking of emotional effects that can be recreated through the music, nothing in all Wagner — for the tenor at least — perhaps eclipses the last act of *Tannhauser*. This is a long and difficult role, but Wagner's inspiration in the last act seems to revivify the singer, that is if he's been conserving his energies for the singing of the role. You cannot stay up and carouse all the night before and expect to do justice to a Wagnerian part," he stated, with a twinkle in his eye, reminding us that he was very much a human being.

Though best known for his Wagnerian roles, particularly in this country, Mr. Melchoir has appeared in many other operas, both in Italian and English. Last year, he sang the name part in Verdi's *Otello* in London, and the English critics hailed him as the greatest interpreter of the role since Tamagno.

Mr. Melchior speaks English fluently, and is an ardent advocate for the singing of opera in English in this country. He has been recording and broadcasting since shortly after the World War. In this connection, he tells of some amusing experiences. In the early days, when broadcasting was in a somewhat experimental stage, he was one of the first artists to broadcast a radio program from a studio in London. This was back in 1920. At that time, Marconi — who had an experimental station at Chelmsford near London— invited Melchior and the late Nellie Melba, who incidently was the first woman chosen to broadcast, to sing over the air.

"The microphone I faced," he laughingly told us, "was a most unique affair, for it was made of a wooden cigar box propped up by a London policeman's stick. I think both Mme. Melba and I doubted its potentialities. Things have certainly changed since then. I remember the first time I made a record. It was in my native Denmark. I was placed in a small room with the musicians playing my accompaniment so close around me that I couldn't move a foot either way, for fear of stepping on an instrument. I was told to sing directly into a horn, and for fear that I would deflect a tone from the stylus at the other end — and cause a blast in the recording — an attendant manipulated my head from behind. Is it any wonder that some artists in the old days could never successfully record?"

The significance and value of recordings, Mr. Melchior contends, places a great responsibility on the interpreting artist. For that reason no artist should make a recording unless he is feeling at his best in every way. He hopes he may sing all his Wagnerian roles for phonographic transmission in the near future.

Behind The Metropolitan Broadcasts

How the Illusion of an Opera Performance Is Brought to Your Loudspeaker

By Lawrence Abbott

WITHIN the next two weeks New York City opera-goers will be able to resume their pilgrimages to the historic yellow-brick building on Broadway which houses the Metropolitan Opera, for on May eleventh, for the first time in the half-century-long career of this famous New York institution, a spring season of popular-priced opera will be launched. And when Saturday afternoon of the first week of this popular season rolls around, opera-lovers all over the United States — and in other parts of the world, too — will be able to resume their Saturday afternoon listening habits, hitherto confined to the winter months. For the Saturday matinée performances of this season, like those of the winter season, will be broadcast over coast-to-coast National Broadcasting Company networks.

With these supplementary opera broadcasts in the immediate offing, it may be of interest to those who are in the habit of listening to Metropolitan Opera performances on the air to know something of "how the wheels go round." To the listener, opera — if not all operas, at least a good many of the French and Italian operas—may seem simple and relaxing. But to the staff of engineers, announcers, production directors and writers who are responsible for broadcasting them, the task is anything but simple, and certainly not relaxing. Relaying a stage performance of opera to radio sets at home is infinitely more complicated than producing and transmitting a successful studio broadcast. In the first place, an opera house was never designed to be a broadcasting studio. Nor was opera meant to be heard without being seen. Nor does an opera performance necessarily conform in its schedule to the timing which would be most effective from the standpoint of broadcasting.

At the Metropolitan Opera House, Box 44 in the Grand Tier (the second tier above the orchestra seats) is the heart of the broadcasting operations. It is almost in the center of the horseshoe. During the week it is no different from the boxes around it — or, rather, hardly different. The same little foyer, or coat room, with its walls of red silk brocade. The same furnishings. The same half-dozen chairs in the box itself. And the same heavy, dark red hanging separating the box from the little foyer behind it. A careful observer, of course, would notice that Box 44, unlike the ordinary boxes, is separated from its foyer not only by the hanging, but also by a glass-paneled door. But on Saturday afternoons it takes no acute observer to notice that this is no usual box. The little foyer is well cluttered with the technical equipment of a radio engineer's field headquarters. Near the glass-paneled door is a high desk, stool and microphone for the announcer, Milton Cross. The box itself contains but two chairs, side by side, each with a small table in front of it. The chair on the left is for the engineer whose responsibility it is that voices and orchestra are picked up with the right volume and balance; the chair on the right is occupied by a production director whose duty it is to warn the engineer of entrances, cues, stage action, etc. Before the left chair is what a layman would describe as a black instrument board (engineers speak of it as a "mixing panel"), with many knobs and a something that looks like an ammeter on it. Before the right chair is a dimly illuminated rack which holds a vocal score of the opera. During the five-minute period preceding the opera, and during a good part of the intermissions, the broadcasting is done from the snug, tightly-closed and rather airless little foyer which has been turned into a temporary miniature broadcasting studio. But while the opera is on the air the announcer and engineer who are located in this little studio can relax, for then its destinies are largely controlled by the two men who sit side by side out front in the box.

If Box 44 is the heart of the machinery behind the broadcasting of Metropolitan

Opera, the microphones are the nerves. Hidden in the footlights, where they are invisible to the audience, are four microphones, two on the right side of the stage and two on the left. High above the orchestra pit, almost at the top of the proscenium arch, four more microphones are suspended from the ceiling. How these eight microphones are used is an art all its own — an art which was developed and perfected through years of experimenting by the broadcasting company's operatic expert on its engineering staff, Charles Grey.

Behind the stage the broadcasters have another point of contact with the opera performance. Not a microphone, but a telephone connection which keeps Box 44 informed with what is happening back stage. Near the stage director's desk, with earphones on his head, and a small mouthpiece tucked between the lapels of his coat, stands the NBC announcer, Daniel Russell (who, by the way, was chosen for this particular assignment because of the fact that he is an excellent linguist, and can therefore decipher the international medley of languages spoken back stage). By means of this private telephone line, popularly known as a "P. L.", information can be flashed to Box 44 that — for example — the curtain will rise in two minutes, or that the conductor is leaving his dressing room and will therefore be entering the orchestra pit in about twenty-five seconds.

A Staff of Engineers

The telephone line is actually a four-way line. On one end is the announcer stationed back stage. On another is an engineer in Box 44, located in the little foyer beside Milton Cross. On a third is another engineer in the adjoining box, Box 42, which NBC has also appropriated in order to broadcast interviews and guest speakers. And on a fourth end is still another engineer in a Radio City studio, the field staff's point of contact with headquarters. Over this four-way line information passes back and forth not only of the timing of the broadcast but of the volume and quality of sound picked up by the microphones.

Volume and quality of sound . . . this is, after all ,the most important thing about the opera broadcasts, and in its achievement lies the engineering art to which reference was made several paragraphs ago. This art, as it applies to broadcasting from the stage of New York's Metropolitan Opera House, is practically the invention of Charles Grey, who is the engineer in charge of the broadcasts. For two years Grey handled the broadcasts of the Chicago Civic Opera Company, and since the Metropolitan first went on the air on that now-historic Christmas afternoon in 1931 he has been the engineer in charge there. It was he was worked out the system of arranging and using microphones in order to carry the illusion of opera into the home.

What is this system? And what is its purpose?

Creating An Illusion

Unlike a symphony concert, opera consists of drama as well as music; without the dramatic situations and the action on the stage much of operatic music would be meaningless. The problem of the broadcaster, as the NBC looks at it, is to create an illusion of this three dimensional art, using only the one-dimensional medium of radio. In other words, not simply to provide the radio listener with a concert consisting of voices and orchestra in proper balance, but rather to convey an impression of the action and the dramatic conflict that is being portrayed simultaneously through dramatic action on the stage and through orchestral commentary from the musicians' pit. If, therefore, in a broadcast of opera, a singer's voice does not sound clearly and evenly during each and every note, this is not a failing on the part of radio transmission, but an effect deliberately sought for by the radio engineers, an effect which corresponds to the aural sensations enjoyed by members of the audience present at the performance, as they listen to singers who move from one part of the stage to another and at times even turn their backs.

In any auditorium a large proportion of the music which reaches the ears of the audience arrives as reflected sound — sound that has bounded off the walls and ceiling. The acoustics of radio broadcasting like those of auditorium designing, call for a nicety of balance between direct and reflected sound. For instance, there are four microphones cradled in the footlights, two on the right and two on the left; these microphones are not directed upward at the singers but are pointed rather towards the floor of the stage and receive the reflected sound which comes from the wooden floor. In this way the voices sound more as they actually do in the opera house, for the voices as the audience hears them have rebounded from the scenery, the walls of the proscenium arch and other vantage points in the opera house before arriving at their destination in the orchestra or family circle, as the case may be.

The footlight microphones, by the way, have been placed in pairs for very good reasons. Each pair of microphones consists of a "short perspective" mike and a 'long perspective" mike. Perhaps the clearest way of explaining these two terms is to draw an analogy between broadcasting and photography. A news-reel photographer can take both distant views and close-ups of a football game without moving the position of his camera through the employment of different lenses. Broadcasters can achieve a similar result, not by different types of microphones, but by placing microphones at various angles. Thus the radio engineer can even remedy the deficiencies of the stage director. By fading from one microphone into another he can make a voice recede some twenty feet even though the singer remains motionless on the stage. It sometimes happens that during an opera that action vital to the cause of the drama takes place on the stage though the singers do not change their relative positions; ordinarily the radio audience would lose the dramatic effect of this action; but the radio engineer steps into the breech and creates a similar effect by moving the apparent position of the voices.

The Footlight Microphones

Through the manipulation of these four footlight microphones, the engineer can bring together in proper balance solos, duets, concerted numbers, chorus singing, and offstage music of all sorts, including hunting horns, choruses of pilgrims, monks or soldiers and the famous trumpet call from the ramparts in *Fidelio*. It is even possible to restore proper balance when it is actually lacking in the opera house, such as when, in a duet, one singer of notable volume is facing straight ahead while the other, whose voice is of lesser volume, is facing the wings.

One would think that these four footlight microphones would give the engineer enough to worry about, but they tell only half the story. If they were the only ones used, the orchestra would be practically inaudible. So four more microphones are used. They are located high over the orchestra pit, no more than two ever being used at one time, however. They range in height from 40 to 60 feet about the orchestra. At that distance, according to Engineer Grey, only ten per cent of the sound of the orchestra is direct, and ninety per cent is reflected.

Why four microphones? Because it has been found, after much experimenting, that no one location and position will give the best results on all different types of orchestration. One of the microphones is Grey's favorite for broadcasting Verdi's operas. It is located above the wood-wind section of the orchestra, but faces downward at an angle directly toward the strings. Above this microphone a piece of felt has been placed to prevent too much reflected sound from the ceiling striking it. Squarely in the middle is located another microphone facing straight down. This particular position is said to give best results when used with passages of more subtle orchestration. This microphone, we understand, is happiest during a broadcast of Debussy's *Pelleas et Melisande*. It has also been found to be the most successful way of capturing the ethereal orchestration of the Prelude to *Lohengrin*. In general, however, Wagner's operas make use of yet another pair of microphones, located somewhat over the string section of the orchestra, one about ten feet higher than the other. During crescendo passages the pick-up is gradually transferred from the lower to the higher and more distant microphone — a procedure which requires skill in execution and also a detailed knowledge of the score, but which transmits the full effect of crescendos without causing such an increase in volume as to require the engineer to turn down the volume control.

Have to Know Their Opera

Imagine that your radio set at home had eight separate volume control knobs, and that, if you wanted to listen to *Die Walkuere* on a Saturday afternoon you would have to keep your fingers racing between at least six of these knobs, always making sure to blend orchestra, singers-at-the-right-of-the-stage and singers-to-the-left so as to achieve a perfect balance of tone. That is what the engineer who sits out in the front of Box 44 has to do with the "mixing panel" before him and a pair of earphones on his head. As a matter of fact, it is such a taxing job that two engineers are needed to perform it, alternating act by act — Grey taking turns with his assistant, Bowman.

Each week, before attempting such a task, these two engineers study the opera score and familiarize themselves with the sequence of events taking place on the other side of the footlights. During a performance the engineer's eyes are glued to the stage and his mind is concentrated on the sounds which come through his head set. But he has another important guide which helps him enor-

(*Continued on Page* 16)

The Tragedy of Alexander Glazounoff

By William Kozlenko

THE death of Alexander Glazounoff last month closes a rich historical chapter in Russian music. A personality associated with the most notable of names, he was the last of the men who still retained something of the romance of a past gigantic era. When we realize that Glazounoff was a contemporary, more or less, of such musicians as Wagner, Brahms, Tschaikowsky, Scriabine, Debussy, Liszt, Borodin, Rimsky - Korsakoff, Moussorgsky, Cesar Franck, Balakireff, and others, we suddenly become aware of the magnitude of his heritage. In what other period of musical art are we confronted by such an array of significant personalities, whose paths cross so strongly, yet whose art is distinguished for its individual merits? Moreover, each name stands for something individual, something personal in achievement — although each tried to express himself in his own devised idiom — they all share one thing in common: the excitement of the romanticism, and the drama, of their generation. Glazounoff's tragedy, however, lay in the fact that, though alive physiologically, he was already dead (of recent years) artistically. To witness the birth of new composers, "lesser giants", as it were, than he was accustomed to know; to observe the things he loved and cherished in music disavowed and abused by a new and intolerant generation, unable to apprehend the things he tried so hard to express in his art, is a condition which cannot be described in words. One must needs live through it personally to feel the pain, the poignancy of frustration.

Glazounoff was unable to grow with his new age. That perhaps was his greatest tragedy. He could not discard the obsolescent mannerisms of an older, a moribund generation. In this he must be considered old-fashioned, for it is this allegiance to a foregoing period that makes his music seem dated. Are there men who, though old in years, are still in forefront of the new? Certainly Sibelius is such a man, who, born in the same year (1865) as Glazounoff, can hardly be considered old-fashioned. Whereas Sibelius continued to grow creatively, to participate in the whelm of new ideas, Glazounoff, conversely, after a certain process of development, grew no more. He continued to write, of course; but the things he conceived were said previously by him, and, in many cases, stated better. Glazounoff, in short, penned his obituary as a composer many years ago. He lies buried in his scores; some, it must be said, magnificent and towering monuments.

In spite of his natural shortcomings as a composer, one cannot dismiss him too glibly from his accredited position in music. For, meagre though it is compared to that of Brahms or Sibelius or even Tschaikowsky, Glazounoff has his niche carved out in the hall of fame. One cannot deny to him certain indubitable values which make for essential greatness. His music is, for one, built of solid stuff. It is distinguished by high technical craftsmanship, and in many places, possesses profound musical inspiration. But he lacks that "divine spark", that mysterious ingredient which divides the ordinary from the extraordinary, the commonplace from the sublime, the follower from the inventor. Indeed, the music of Glazounoff has power and eloquence, for it was given to him to soar occasionally, to enter through the mysterious portals on the heights; but he could not, unfortunately, remain there too long; it made him dizzy.

Of recent years his activities as a composer were subordinated to those of teaching. And, as a teacher, he has carried his name to new victories: for what he stood for as an artist has been consummated in the artistry of his many distinguished pupils. We must remember that Glazounoff was a distinguished composer, a creative artist, not essentially a pedagogue, and the things he naturally stressed in art reflected creative artistry rather than pedagogical theories. From his distinguished teaching sprung a new generation of composers: young men fired by ideals to serve not only their art but their society as well. He certainly had little to do with that, but he learned, perhaps too late, that art, in order to retain some spring of vitality,

must emanate from the dynamic sources of the people.

For instance, this description of Glazounoff by Montague-Nathan is an apt estimate of the composer, as man and artist. "He lives in the house of his fathers, sleeps in the bed on which he was born, works in the room in which it formerly stood." Is this not a keen psychological portrait of the man who escaped into a period of life most agreeable to himself? He lived in a highly socialistic society, but he remained till the very end of his life the aloof "Bohemian" individualist. It is, of course, rather difficult to become converted to a new social ideology on the threshold of seventy. In his case it was not only society that changed, but artistic creeds also. Yet Glazounoff lived through several violent upheavals: socially as well as aesthetically.

He survived long enough to see the cult of Stravinsky bloom and die. He lived to see the inauguration of new harmonic monstrosities, which, after a brief gasp, had a sudden relapse and passed away. He witnessed — and probably participated in — the violent discussions centering around Schoenberg and his school. But the greatest satisfaction, of all, was for him to live long enough to see that, in spite of these ephemoral experiments, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms and Wagner were still the most popular, the most firmly established, of all composers. Glazounoff must indeed have been appreciative of many things. He has seen empires crumble and fall. He survived a civil war. He has witnessed — what he believed to be — inviolate rules crushed and discarded. And he has stood godfather to a new generation of young Soviet composers, bestowing his blessings on the most eminent: Dmitri Shostakovitch. There is one thing, however, for which we all must revere the memory of Alexander Glazounoff. He remained in his native country. Even though he could not understand the suddent transition from a decadent empire to a young and fresh society, even though it meant that he give up his individual property (and he was a wealthy man); he remained steadfast to the richness of his country's tradition, and did not seek to escape. He shared its tragedies as well as its triumphs. He made himself invaluable to the new regime in the only way with which he was familiar: as a teacher, and, as such, sought to retain the tradition which he must have known would die when he passed on. And, in this respect, he attained new glories, for this newly born society understood his value and respected and glorified him for it.

But, to return to our critical evaluation: what is the position of Glazounoff as a composer? Unfortunately, not a very impressive one. It is rather difficult to do more than evolve a personal idiom and continue to manipulate it, when one has such unique inventors as Wagner, Liszt and Debussy as contemporaries. Glazounoff's sympathies lay in

Glazounoff after a drawing by Seroff

the direction of classicism. He is "to be reckoned as representing the orthodox in music, but he represents the orthodox in many phases," so writes Montague-Nathan. "In his first orchestral overture based on Greek themes," he continues, "the 'little Glinka' has followed his precursor in employing crude folk song as symphonic-thematic material. *Stenka Razin* pays a tribute to the musico-historical method of nationalism . . . . The later symphonies show that he can write music that, far from being less interesting than his programmatic works, have a strength and a beauty that have yet to be estimated at their true value as examples of Russian music."

He was in every sense a sincere though limited artist, and wrote music with a deep sense of responsibility to his art. Retaining the best of the romantic tradition — a tradi-

tion which has succeeded in him being called the "Russian Brahms," because of his affinity to the immortal Johannes — Glazounoff injected into his music a mastery of technique engendered by a maturity of creative expression. It is this technical maturity that has given Glazounoff's music a character of nervelessness, of coldness. He was not an over-emotional person, which may account for the impression his hearers received that his music was bereft of passion. It is not that he was unemotional, but that he subjugated emotion to technical mastery. Moreover, his unique facility as a youth stood him in no good stead. His early works, though finished, are for the most part redundant, over-elaborated and thematically over-stated; but a consummate craftsman, he was able to put things across that would have failed miserably under a less confident, less sure, hand. As he matured, he strove more and more for simplicity, for clarity of expression, and certainly, the *Violin Concerto*, the *Fourth and Sixth Symphonies*, the *Raymonda* and *The Seasons Ballets*, are compositions of some permanent value, significant as creations of an honest and imaginative artist.

Glazounoff has been an industrious composer; too industrious many claim. But no one can condemn a man his facility, his urge to write, particularly when he has learned to marshall his simplicity, in order to project better examples of his craft.

What of the man's life?

As Mrs. Rosa Newmarch writes: "Apart from his art, Glazounoff's life has been uneventful. Few composers have made their debut under more favorable auspices, or have won appreciation so rapidly. Nor did he in youth ever experience the sting of neglect or the inconvenience of poverty. His life seemed the realization of a fairy-tale set to music until the political troubles of his country threw his life and art into the shadows."

When he was fourteen years old he met Balakireff, who was so impressed with the lad's talent that he advised him to study privately with Rimsky-Korsakoff. Rimsky later describes Glazounoff in his *Autobiography* as "a charming boy with beautiful eyes who played the piano very clumsily . . . Elementary theory and *solfeggio* proved unnecessary for him as he had a superior ear." (When one recalls his amazing feat of playing from memory the whole Overture to *Prince Igor*, the entire opera being left unfinished at the time of Borodin's death, we cannot help but register astonishment at such an exhibition of phenomenal memory.) Glazounoff was under the tutelage of the master for almost two years, at which time he made remarkable strides in orchestration and composition, until Rimsky informed him that, young as he was, he was fully matured both technically and aesthetically to begin composing seriously. The result of this encouragement led to the composition of his *First Symphony*, which was presented in 1882. The audience was so completely overcome at the loftiness of the writing that it expressed its enthusiasm by thunderous applause, at the end of the work, demanding to see the composer. Imagine their astonishment when they saw a young boy of sixteen climb to the stage and acknowledge their plaudits. Other works, of similar youthful verve and beauty, followed in quick succession. Glazounoff's *First String Quartet* was given its premiere, and made a deep impression on its hearers by its impassioned style, its melodic gracefulness. It was not much longer before the fame of Glazounoff penetrated beyond the frontiers of Russia. Liszt, in 1889, became deeply attached to the young man and devoted himself to the task of introducing Glazounoff's music to Germany. When in 1900, Glazounoff was appointed professor at the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music where he taught composition and score reading, he was already famous as a composer.

In an interesting analysis by Montague-Nathan — which is worth quoting in part — he discusses the evolution of Glazounoff as a symphonic writer in this wise:

"(Glazounoff) has gradually drawn away from the use of external aids and has relied more and more on inherent beauty. Beginning with *Stenka Razin* — the work of a man who was reckoned, at the time of its composition, a powerful recruit to the nationalist coterie — he has progressed to the *Eighth Symphony*, which has earned him the title of 'a contemporary classic master'.

"As a half-way house in this process of evolution, the *Fourth Symphony* (*Opus* 48), in *E Flat Major*, repays examination. In this we see the composer hesitating about his road. It contains reflections of the influence of Borodin, . . . of Liszt in its construction . . . At this stage the composer has traveled far; on the road still before him he is to purify the elements of his creative substance and to divert it of everything which is not essentially musical . . ."

(*Continued on Page* 16)

The Permanent Chopin

As Revealed in the Mazurkas

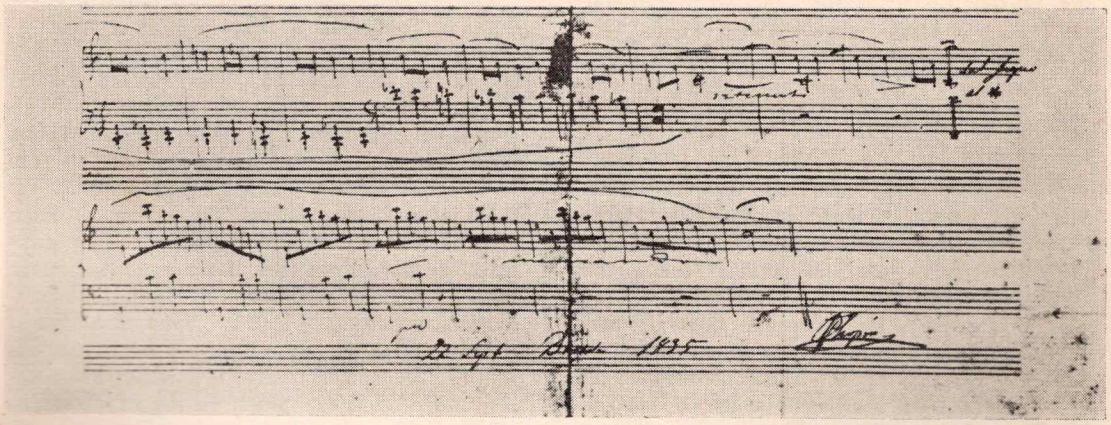
By Philip Barr

A GOOD many people are distressed to find that Chopin is not spoken of as highly today as formerly. Those who used to invoke his name as an indication of their good taste are being more and more shamed into silence. This snobbish part of Chopin's réclame was bound to fall off anyway, of course, and without necessarily reflecting in any way on his merit — when a composer becomes extremely well known, you can no longer get as much credit for liking him. This is even true of Bach at the present time, and Bach's real standing is higher than ever. But there is a more definite sense in which Chopin's stock has really gone down. We all admit that he is an extremely important composer — often a great composer — but many of us are very tired of him.

A lot of Chopin's music sounds stale today. A certain swooning something, an exhibition of strong but rather obvious emotion, the atmosphere of an over-upholstered room — which, a generation ago, we were beginning to notice and grumble at in the *Nocturnes* — now seem to be present in nearly every thing he wrote. Even the *F Minor Ballade*, the *A Flat Polonaise*, the *B Minor Scherzo* — they are splendid works, but they have gone a little stale.

And yet, in my opinion — and I speak as one who never wants to hear the *G Minor Ballade* or the *F Minor Fantasy* again — there are some works of Chopin that are very much alive, that have preserved their freshness and can still be enjoyed by the most satiated palate.

There are such things, of course, as the great *Arpeggio Study in C Minor, Opus* 25, *No.* 12, which is simply too tremendous to grow stale. Chopin did not often write a whole piece on this level. But there are some passages in other works, that are as good— while they last. The introduction to the *A Flat Polonaise*, for example: it is much the best thing in the piece. Would that Chopin had written more often in this "free" style. Then that section in the *F Sharp Minor Polonaise, Opus* 44, *just* before the *Trio* — surely the strangest, most harsh and uncompromising *Slav* music in all Chopin. A good deal of the sombre, but grand and unusually profound *Polonaise-Fantasy, Opus* 61, and of course, the development of the first movement of the *B Flat Minor Sonata.* I wish I could say the whole movement — it is usually listed as an outstanding example of the greater Chopin — but it is too unequal. There is the bald and abrupt entrance of the second subject, and the appalling anticlimax of the *Recapitulation.* Chopin was no better at handling the *Recapitulation* than any of the other Romantics and would have been wiser to have



Facsimile of the autographed part of Chopin's Mazurka in A Flat, Opus 24

omitted it — like Berlioz in the *Symphonie Fantastique* and Schubert in the *Wanderer Fantasy*. Generally his perfect sense of form kept him away from "Sonata Form," which was uncongenial to him.

But, in any case, it is not about these more grandiose aspects of Chopin that I wish to speak. There are certain quite unassuming works of his, that seem to have a peculiar survival value.

For instance, the *F Minor Concerto*. Almost every writer on Chopin shakes his head over the concertos — they are uncouthly orchestrated — they are in his early, light Parisian style. All of which is true. But, in the first place, the bad orchestral portions are too important to matter, and, in the second, it is precisely this light Parisian style, with all its charming and frivolous ornamentation, that has preserved the concertos, while more strenuous and portentous works have become burned out. The concertos "date" — true. But they always have dated. They conjure up the Parisian *salon* of the 1830's. They are veritable fashion plates; this they were in 1860 and 1890, and this they continue to be — with the same charm — in 1936. Whereas the *G Minor Ballade* — which addressed itself to us long ago in more "universal" terms, which spoke to us of passion, and what-not— has become a bore. It is too heavy to be turned into a gay, fluffy museum-piece — but the concertos do this to perfection, for that is what they have always been. And in the first two movements of the *F Minor* we have veritable jewels, for here the Parisian style (I use the term for convenience and because the style *does* suggest Paris — although Chopin had not yet been to Paris when he wrote this) is blended with exquisite sentiment; passion — if you will — but passion so delicately revealed that it has not by repetition become wearisome. The piano recitative in the slow movement, played in octaves above a *tremolando* string accompaniment, is both nobly rhetorical and of a consummate elegance.

But now I come to the main subject of this article: a whole class of Chopin works which can be pronounced, very nearly one and all, perfectly fresh — the *Mazurkas*. Just as the *Nocturnes* were the first to go bad, so they will be the last. They deserve separate and detailed consideration. Here we have Chopin's nearest approach to folk-music. Some people call the *Mazurkas* the quintessence of Chopin, but I should prefer to call them the quintessence of the Pole in Chopin — which after all was only a part of him, if the best part. The *Mazurkas*, in fact, survive for opposite reasons to the concertos — by their contact with the soil. In them, Chopin is at his *least* Parisian. At this point, there arises a paradox: no other Chopin works demand so much from the pianist (in interpretation) — they become almost a collaboration between Chopin and the pianist, and this may seem to belittle Chopin's share. But no — that is merely their affinity with folk-art; it is a symptom of virility, and also of subtlety. We do not think the less of Flamenco music, because it must be sung by one born and bred in Southern Spain. It is a special art and needs special performers. Likewise, Chopin's Mazurkas. It is often said that no one but a Slav can play them.

There are some feeble Mazurkas, of course. I have always found *Opus* 24, *No.* 3, *in A Flat*, very irritating. It opens with a commonplace little tune which comes to a pause, on a sort of high kick, under a *Fermata*. Then it does this again. The effect is almost embarrassing. There are some more banal Mazurkas like this, and others where Chopin gives way to his besetting sin, and wallows and swoons — others too which are not good enough to stand the over-playing they have received. *Opus* 7, *No.* 1, *in B Flat*, for instance — a bright and pleasant piece of music — but surely not of great importance — and *Opus* 17, *No.* 4, *in A Minor*, which, with all its beauty, now wears something of a "dying-duck" aspect. It has become too much the Nocturne.

But there are more Mazurkas that are superb, free alike from stuffy sentiment and from obviousness, and there are six or seven that are truly great.

One of the best is quite an early one — *Opus* 7, *No.* 3 *in F Minor*. Very Polish — with a snap and a bite, and those spread chords in the left-hand which often misled people. They should sound rough—as though struck on a guitar. This Mazurka has one of those fascinating introductory lines, in this case with rather a barbaric sound; after its troglodyte drum-beating, the opening theme has an almost feminine agitation — by contrast it sounds all the more nervous, more human. It is interesting to compare Friedman's recording of this with Horowitz's. Friedman's tendency to be rather matter-of-fact is here not excessive. I consider his reading more vigorous than Horowitz's, which, with all its magical color, is a little too *affetuoso* for this particular piece.

Much earlier still is a posthumous one in *A Minor, Opus* 68, *No.* 2. This was written in 1827, when Chopin was only 17 and Schubert was still alive. It is a charming little work — melancholy, but never cloying — almost childlike in its simplicity. And speaking of posthumous ones in *A Minor*, I see no reason to despise — as some writers do— the one in the neighboring set — *Opus* 67, *No.* 4. It is a bit hackneyed (what with Kreisler's violin arrangement) and the middle section is commonplace, but the main section has the true, Polish sadness, especially after the first double bar.

Among the more mature Mazurkas, a delightful and somewhat neglected specimen (it has never been recorded) is *Opus* 24, *No.* 2 *in C Major*. Anything more clear-cut, anything farther removed from the stuffy side of Chopin, it would be impossible to imagine; it has as much of a peasant ring as Moussorgsky's *Gopak*. Note the second subject, apparently in F, but with a curious B natural — the Lydian mode. This modal touch is very common in the Mazurkas, it is one of the many things that give them their folk-music character. Others being the queer Eastern scale with the augmented second (see *Opus* 24, *No.* 4—middle section), the lightning-like alternations between major and minor (see end of same Mazurka) and the peculiar rhythm with the stamp on the third beat, calling for a tiny pause which only Poles know instinctively how to make.

Another modal tune (Phrygian, this time) is the opening of the big *C Sharp Minor, Opus* 41, *No.* 1. Note that when this tune returns later on, it is no longer diatonic — Chopin puts in the augmented second, so we now have two of his effects combined. And there is just a whiff of the Lydian mode at the very end of the breezy and otherwise exclusively "tonal" *D Major, Opus* 33, *No.* 2.

Last I seem to insist on homely, peasant vigor at any cost, I will follow up these remarks on *Opus* 24, *No.* 2 with a tribute to a Mazurka that is its exact opposite — that curious unfinished work in *F Minor, Opus* 68, *No.* 4, supposed to be Chopin's last composition, written when he was too sick even to stagger over to the piano; he wrote it down but never lived to play it. It is morbid beyond words, but a masterpiece, for all that. The passage in the remote key of A is absolutely logical, and gives a wonderful impression of feverish death-bed gaiety.

A Mazurka which is melancholy without being morbid is the wonderful *Opus* 24, *No.* 4 *in B Flat Minor* — to which I have already referred in speaking of Chopin's use of the Eastern scale and of alternations between major and minor. The last half page of this one is one of the most haunting things ever written and even surpasses in my opinion, the close of the famous *B Minor, Opus* 33, *No.* 4. Both of these, and also *Opus* 33, *No.* 2 are played very often, but they are good enough to stand it. *Opus* 33, *No.* 2 *in D Major*, is a remarkable piece. There doesn't seem, at first, to be anything in it at all — just a gay, little tune that goes round and round like a top, first in the tonic, then in the dominant — and the middle section is just as repetitious. The whole piece is almost hackneyed — it has been arranged for the violin, and has even been sung, a la Trilby. Yet it never grows wearisome. Why? No one knows. Somehow, Chopin has hit upon one of those simple formulas, like an Irish jig, which can stand endless repetition. That is all we can say.

Its companion in *B Minor, Opus* 33, *No.* 4 is the most popular of the greater Mazurkas. I suspect that this is partly because it is not very difficult to interpret. It has a fairly obvious dramatic plan — the dreamy opening theme the savage interruptions and the "deserted ballroom" business at the end, in single notes — and moreover, it will stand an almost exaggerated *tempo rubato*. The *B Minor* is, comparatively speaking, foolproof.

Not so the great *C Sharp Minor, Opus* 30, *No.* 4! Here is a work that the average pianist had better avoid, as he usually does. Horowitz's recording of this is Chopin-playing at its greatest. After the expressive introductory measures, the theme centers with electrifying effect. There is the same harsh guitar-snapping as in the earlier F Minor, but the mood is much more subtle and demands a very different rhythm. It is as if the guitar (to pursue the analogy) were no longer accompanying a dance, but were following the dark and agitated strains of a Flamenco song. Horowitz's reading of this Mazurka is beyond praise — in the way he alters the tone-color of the instrument at the bottom of the first page, where the mood changes from rough defiance to something more silken and mysterious, with soft, unearthly flashes of heat-lightning in the right hand. The middle section is more ordinary, but appropriate — not a let-down. The concluding bars are noble and tragic.

Three of the greatest Mazurkas are in this key of *C Sharp Minor*, the other two being *Opus* 41, *No.* 1, and *Opus* 50, *No.* 3.

(*To be concluded next month*)

The Music Shelf

A New Organ Collection and the Songs of Stephen Foster

SYMPHONIC PIECES FOR ORGAN. Selected and edited by Albert E. Wier. N. Y. Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1935. 447 pages. Price $5.00.

HARCOURT, Brace presents another volume of its recently inaugurated series of music albums in *Symphonic Pieces for Organ*, an admirable example of clear printing on substantial paper. The cover is of serviceable heavy paper, with cloth support for the sewing. The open book lies flat on the music rack. The arrangement of the material is chronological, with indexes by title, composer, and type of music. Each composition is prefaced by a short program note.

The editor, Albert E. Wier, is well known for his *Whole World Series*, the green-covered books that for many years have been prominently displayed on most music counters throughout the country. He has the knack of choosing for his collections compositions of merit that any practical musician wants to have within easy reach. Within the 447 pages of this new album he has brought together a vast body of music, much of which has not up to now been available for the organ, and that would require too much time, and perhaps ability, for the overworked organist to reduce from the full orchestral scores or to amplify from piano reductions.

As a transcriber, Mr. Wier (or his assistants — there is nothing to show who is responsible, except for the statement that Gigout's adaptation of the *Fantaisie Dialoguée* of Boellman is used) has kept the organ's capabilities and limitations well in mind. The notes lie well in the hand, and the pedal work avoids difficulties. The tempi, expression marks, and general phrasing are indicated, but not the fingering. Instead of suggesting registration, the original orchestral scoring is stated. Slight changes are sometimes made in the actual notes of the score, as in the cadenza for solo violin (page 386) in *Till Eulenspiegel*. Each number or movement from a large work seems to be given without any cuts.

The fifty selections of music offer a catholic survey of symphonic music, too numerous to catalogue here in detail. Glancing through the book, we find Handel's *Water Music*, the *Largo* from Bach's *Concerto for Two Violins*, the Gluck-Mottl *Ballet Suite*, sections of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven symphonies beside little known works of Gossec and von Dittersdorf. We little expected the *March to the Scaffold* from Berlioz's *Fantastic Symphony*, and a movement from Wagner's early symphony among the well-represented romantics; the Wagner operas are ignored. The *Allegretto* from Franck's *Symphony* and the *Finlandia* were fore-ordained choices, and the *Adagio* from Bruckner's *Seventh* is welcome. The color and syncopations of the *Prince Igor Dances* will be hard to realize in this simple organ version. Parts of Moussorgsky's *Pictures from an Exhibition*, and the *Dream Pantomime* from *Hansel and Gretel* respond well to transcription. *Till Eulenspiegel*, as we previously intimated, makes his appearance. Excerpts from Glazounoff's *Raymonda*, Rachmaninoff's *Second Piano Concerto*, Stravinsky's *Fire Bird*, and Prokofieff's *Classic Symphony* and *Love for Three Oranges* bring us fairly well to date.

A fair amount of the music in this book will be suitable for the use of a church organist, and most of it can be profitably placed on the programs that a busy college or recital organist must provide. The album is a "must" for anyone who will use transcriptions. The player should know already, either from concert or phonograph hearings, his music, and with a three manual organ at his disposal, will find that each number demands the full scope of his musicianship and imagination. Few of the selections will require a bigger technique than the average competent and diligent organist can muster. Not often is such a challenge presented to him.

—A. P. De Weese

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THE SONGS OF STEPHEN FOSTER. Selected and Edited by Albert E. Wier. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 160 pages. Price $2.00.

SOMETIMES we hear the songs of Stephen Foster referred to as American folk songs, for they incorporate the sentiments and feelings of the people from Maine to

California, from Georgia to Oregon. Back in the days when pioneers were making their way to the West in covered wagons, the strains of *Oh, Susanna* were sung across prairie, desert and mountain. At the same time, negroes on the Mississippi and all through the South on plantations sang that song as well as in music halls and beer gardens. More than likely most of those who sang it lustily and joyously never knew that it was composed by Stephen Foster nor that behind its composition lay the great tragedy in Foster's life. The story of how this song was written has been recently set forth on the screen. Susan was the composer's first sweetheart's name. the only girl he is supposed to have ever loved, who disappointed him by marrying another man.

Foster wrote many songs, songs of varied character — Southern dialect ones, sentimental ballads, sacred and humorous songs. In this book, we have seventy of these — a fine collection — selected and edited by one who appreciates and understands the music that appeals to the hearts of the people. The editor has also provided an especial feature — an excellent bibliography in pictures and notes to be found at the head of each of the songs.

All together here is an album which belongs on everybody's music rack, for "leisure hour" singing and a good old get-together at the piano.

—Paul Girard.

CORRESPONDENCE

PRAISE FOR MR. ARCHETTI

The Chicago Daily News
Chicago, Illinois.

Mr. Peter H. Reed, Editor
The American Music Lover,
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Reed:—

You are indeed fortunate in having a critic of Mr. Archetti's calibre as a member of your staff, and I wish to congratulate you. The excellent work he has done for your magazine, especially in the field of swing music, is deserving of only the highest praise.

After that complimentary (though entirely sincere) paragraph, I trust that I may be allowed to make a correction — trivial in itself, yet of the greatest importance. Unfortunately, in your April issue, one word was inserted in Mr. Archetti's article, which completely reversed the meaning of an important sentence. In the second paragraph from the bottom of page 360, the writer quotes Leonard Hibbs as follows: "I do not think that Ellington in his better movements is a composer who is worthy of the serious attention of every school of musical thought." In the first place, the original article (in the magazine "Swing Music") says "Ellington in his better *moments* . . . ." (which slight deviation from the original scarcely merits calling it to your attention) but what I am strongly objecting to is the insertion of the three letter word "not" at the beginning of the same sentence. Mr. Hibbs wrote "I do think that Ellington . . . ."

I personally agree with Mr. Hibbs in *Swing Music* — not Mr. Hibbs in *The American Music Lover*, which latter publication, incidentally, is improving by leaps and bounds.

Your unjustly critical, yet constant reader,

EDGAR GREENTREE.

* * * *

THANK YOU — MR. SCHOLES AND MR. ROSE

Cornaux, Switzerland.

To the Editor.

Dear Mr. Reed:—

Seeing in *The American Music Lover* for December (which a friend just sent me) a review of my *Columbia History of Music* and another of my Listeners Guide I send you a word of appreciation and recall with pleasure our last meeting a few years ago.

I hope that your bright little journal is a great success.

Yours sincerely,

PERCY A. SCHOLES.

April 16, 1936.

* * * *

Little Rock, Arkansas.

The American Music Lover,
12 East 22nd Street
New York, N. Y.

Dear Sirs:—

I thank you for reminding me that my subscription had run out. I enclose $1.50 to renew it, and I hope that it will continue to run as long as I live.

Very truly yours,

G. B. ROSE.

April 11, 1936.

* * * *

A LETTER FROM SCOTLAND

Edinburgh, Scotland.

Peter H. Reed, Esq., *Editor*
The American Music Lover,
12 East 22nd St., New York.

Dear Sir:—

I trust that you will not object to my inflicting this long letter on you but I have been so stimulated by some of the remarks in your March issue that I feel it might be of interest to you to have the views of one who is quite apart from American affairs and who is, therefore, likely to have a somewhat different standpoint.

First I should like to put you right on one thing. Edward VIII is more than King of England — he is also King of Scotland and to a Scotsman there are few things more annoying than the use of "England" when "Britain" is meant. I can quite believe that it must be hard for anyone outside Britain to realise that Scotland is an entirely different country from England, that temperamentally the two races are poles apart and that it really amounts to an insult to refer to England as if it comprised the whole of the United Kingdom. I am sure it was inadvertence on your part and I hope that you will now be able to be correct.

(*Continued on Page* 31)

BEHIND THE METROPOLITAN BROADCASTS

(*Continued from Page* 5)

mously in being prepared for sudden changes in music or action. This guide is the man who occupies the chair beside him, and who follows the vocal score and keeps the engineer posted through a system of signals. During the past year this position has been occupied by Herbert Liversidge, a New Englander, a musician, and one of NBC's seasoned production directors.

Out of the corner of his eye the engineer sees in the semi-darkness a clenched fist rising and falling. This fist is a symbol of the orchestra. The rise means a crescendo; the fall, a diminuendo. Then a pointing finger with the hand held high; this is a cue which indicates the entrance of a principal on a high note. The engineer can tell which singer is meant by the direction in which the finger points. Again, as the engineer watches this hand moving beside him in the dimly lighted box, he notices the thumb and forefinger forming a letter "C". This indicates the entrance of the chorus; if the hand is held high, their first note is to be a high one, if held low, a low one.

Even Milton Cross, at his announcer's desk behind the glass-paneled door, is not free from signals. Perhaps, you have listened to him recounting the various events about to take place in the coming act, and have noticed him to pause for a fraction of an instant and then perhaps read more slowly for a moment as if he were temporarily distracted; if so, it is probably because the engineer beside him has just made motions to indicate that he has just just received word over the "P.L." from back stage that there is one minute left before the conductor will re-enter the pit — which means that Cross must do some rapid mental figuring in order to judge whether or not he will have to abbeviate his remarks. Another thing: When you hear Milton Cross state that "the house lights are dimming," don't take this as first-hand information. He has merely observed the engineer on the other side of the glass-paneled door reach up and turn off the overhead light of the box. This is a pre-arranged signal, since Cross cannot see clearly the actual dimming of the house lights. Perhaps one of these years, when April 1st falls on a Saturday, some jocose engineer will "dim the house lights" for the radio audience when an intermission is only half over.

In a way, it seems that the National Broadcasting Company has worked out an efficient and highly perfected system of bringing opera into every community in the nation. Its engineers have applied the science of acoustics to opera performances to a degree which brings only headaches to the layman or unscientific music lover. Yet these same engineers will tell you that they are only on the threshold of what might be done, and what probably will be done to improve the broadcasting of fine music, through uniting the two sciences of music and acoustics.

GLAZOUNOFF'S TRAGEDY

(*Continued from Page* 10)

Much of his music is still of alloy; but what he lacked as a musical "chemist" he made up as a poet. There are eloquent moods of Oriental splendour; moods of severe classical symmetry; moods of deep, impassioned poetical declamation.

Yes, honor is due him — the master of a past age, who, in his art, recalls to us the heroic beauties, the romantic tension of a period which is quickly falling away. There are several things by Glazounoff which we will always cherish (for example, such works as the *Violin Concerto* and the *Fourth* and *Sixth Symphonies*), and, even though he may, in the coming years, be obscured even more, these works will continue intermittently to shine through the mist of oblivion.

IMPORTANT GLAZOUNOFF RECORDINGS

Violin Concerto, Opus 82 — Heifetz and London Philharmonic Orchestra. Victor set M-218.

Stenka Razin, Symphonic Poem — Brussels Conservatory Orchestra. Columbia discs 7202-03M.

Scenes de Ballet, Opus 52 — New Symphony Orchestra, dir. Goossens. Victor set M-143.

The Seasons, Ballet — Symphony Orchestra, dir. the Composer. Columbia set M. M. No. 5.

EDITORIAL

(*Continued from Page* 1)

because of his exclusive style of composition had a small but faithful following, particu larly in Europe. In recent years, Van Dieren — who was of Dutch parentage — made his home in England where he was known as a critic and author, as well as a composer. Respighi was one of the most eminent of contemporary Italian composers, as well as a distinguished pianist and conductor. His unusual and distinctive sense for tone color ranked him as one of the greatest masters of modern orchestration. In subsequent issues of the magazine, relative comments will be made on these two composers.

Radio Highlights

Many Special Programs Arranged for National Music Week — Frank Black's String Symphony Returns

Everybody's Music

Howard Barlow will direct the Columbia Symphony Orchestra in a unique symphonic series entitled "Everybody's Music", beginning on Sunday, May 3, from 3:00 to 4:00 P. M., EDST, over the WABC-CBS network, as a major part of Columbia's opening participation in National Music Week. This broadcast will be heard at the same time each week thereafter until the return to the network of the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra next fall.

The new series will offer informally a thorough resume of great music in a wide variety of fields. To this end, Neely, well known throughout the radio world as the "Old Stager", has been engaged as the commentator for the programs. In a simple and informal manner, Neely will introduce the music, not as a professional musician, but as a fellow listener who has loved music for many years and is able to chat about each program briefly, informatively, and with imagination for the benefit of the many radio listeners who would care to know a bit more about the music they hear.

So great has been the response of Columbia's nationwide radio audience to symphonic music in recent seasons that "Everybody's Music" has been planned as a nationwide series that will appeal to two kinds of music lovers — those who have studied music and those who enjoy music but wish they knew more about it. Through the medium of the radio the appeal of good music over the air has long since broken through all boundaries of what was once considered the traditional world of the experienced music lover.

●

"Wilderness Road," the dramatic serial written by Richard Stevenson and Charles Tazewell around the experiences of a family of American pioneers who took part in post-Revolutionary history, was chosen recently as a model children's program by the Women's National Radio Committee. "Wilderness Road" is heard over the WABC-Columbia network Monday through Friday of each week from 5:15 to 5:30 P. M., EST.

A Community Sing

Every radio listener will enjoy the opportunity of being a performer when John Barclay leads a series of "Community Sing" programs on the WABC-Columbia network, beginning Sunday, May 10, from 10:30 to 11:00 P. M., EDST. The novel broadcasts will open in the CBS Playhouse in New York where Barclay will lead a typical studio audience in songs which will be selected from both old and new favorites.

It is expected that Barclay will visit other cities and conduct "Community Singing" programs over the network from each.

The studio will be equipped with a screen upon which song slides will be projected for the studio audience to follow. While the studio audience is singing, Barclay will invite the radio audience everywhere to join in with them. Organizations and glee clubs will be invited to participate in the various broadcasts, as well as out-of-town groups holding conventions in New York.

Boston Pop's Concerts

Boston's famous "Pop" Concerts, an institution almost as old as the Boston Symphony Orchestra itself, will be shared with radio listeners from coast to coast through arrangements made by the National Broadcasting Company. Eight Saturday night hours (8:30 to 9:30 p. m., EDST) of these concerts will be broadcast over the NBC-Blue network, commencing May 9, the week following the close of the Boston Symphony Orchestra's regular Saturday night broadcasts over the same network.

●

Works by Charles Martin Loeffler, American composer who died a year ago, and Marion Bauer, one of the foremost of American women cmposers, will be featured during the NBC Music Guild program on Monday, May 4, from 2:30 to 3:00 p. m., EDST, over the NBC-Blue network. As an observance of National Music Week, Loeffler's two *Rhapsodies for Oboe, Viola and Piano,* will be performed by Michel Nazzi, oboeist; Joseph Vieland, violist, and Vladimir Brenner, pianist. Vieland and Brenner also will play Marion Bauer's *Sonata for Viola and Piano.*

String Symphony Broadcasts

The NBC String Symphony's new series, originally announced to begin on April 28, will be inaugurated on Tuesday, May 5, during National Music Week. Dr. Frank Black will observe the national celebration by giving the world premiere of a new American work; Mortimer Wilson's *Concerto Grosso* for String Quartet and String Orchestra.

Other numbers to be heard during the initial broadcast from 9:30 to 10:30 p. m., EDST, over the NBC-Blue network wil be Bachrich's arangement for string orchestra of Bach's *E Major Violin Sonata,* Frank Bridge's *E Minor Suite for String Orchestra,* and two Waltzes from Dvorak's *Opus* 54.

●

On May 12, the String Symphony's broadcast will be as follows: *Sonata for Piano, Opus* 7, Beethoven (arr. Black); *Variations on a Theme by Tchaikowsky,* Arensky; *Heartwounds,* Grieg; *Divertimento,* Leo Wiener; *Springtime,* Grieg.

(*Continued on Page* 32)

Record Notes and Reviews

Reviewers in this Issue: **A. P. De Weese, Paul Girard, William Kozlenko, Philip Miller, Peter Hugh Reed**

ORCHESTRAL

BACH: *Brandenburg Concertos Nos. Five and Six;* played by the Busch Chamber Players, under the direction of Adolf Busch. Columbia Set No. 250, six discs, price $9.00.

The *Fifth Brandenburg Concerto in D Major* is a *concerto grosso* for flute, violin and piano (originally cembalo) with accompanying string orchestra. It is undoubtedly one of the most estimable of all the *Brandenburg Concertos,* a work — which Fuller-Maitland has appropriately termed — "one of the most exhilirating things in music, masterly in design and effect, and giving us a characteristic portrait of the composer in his natural mood of healthy optimism." Although Bach has allotted to the piano the chief part, the charming dialogue of the flute and violin is likewise one of the features of the work. For the first time in a recording, in the new Busch set, we have this dialogue clearly outlined and tonally balanced. Moyse and Busch seem particularly well mated in temperament, for their playing complements each other throughout.

Busch sets the ideal pace for the opening *Allegro* and for the other sections of the work. Cortot in his performance of this concerto played the whole composition too fast, thus destroying much of its linear subtlety and charm. The first movement is an *Allegro,* not a *Presto,* and only when played as an *Allegro* does the dialogue of the flute and violin emerge as pure tonal poetry. The modern urge to play Bach solely from the rhythmic impulse destroys so many linear beauties and leaves one with wrong impressions of the music being entirely mechanistic.

Serkin, as we stated last month, manages to keep his piano parts throughout the six concertos from contrasting too sharply with the instruments of the orchestra. The use of the cembalo in the performance of these works is greatly preferable for its more mellow tone-quality which blends better with the ensemble. A proof of this is found in the Polydor recording of the *Fifth Brandenburg Concerto,* where the cembalo was employed. (Incidently, this set was the best of the six that Melichar made.) Serkin's splendid pianism will undoubtedly prove one of the everlasting joys of this new recording of the *Fifth.* As a matter of fact, it will probably whet many appetites for a concerto-recording from this sterling musician.

Conversely in the *Sixth Brandenburg Concerto in B Flat* Busch sets a more deliberate pace in the first and last movements than did Cortot. The opening *Allegro* suffers less than the final one from this slackened stride. The latter — a true gigue — becomes however somewhat of a jog-trot; but since the linear clarity is well marked throughout one realizes the worth of this more carefully planned reading. The suave *Adagio* is beautifully played, and its recording is just about perfect.

Busch has undeniably done an admirable job in his performances of all six concertos, one which fully exploits the expressive poignancy of their slow movements and the profundity of the contrapuntal mastery of their quicker sections.

—P. H. R.

* * * *

BRAHMS: *Symphony No.* 1 *in C Minor, Opus* 68; played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, direction Leopold Stokowski. Victor Set M301, five discs, price $10.00.

BRAHMS' *First,* which attains its sixtieth birthday this year, could have had no more fitting tribute than this recording to mark the occasion. Without reservations of any kind, I mark this re-recording of the Brahms *First* as the finest contribution Mr. Stokowski has made to the phonograph to date. In this new set — for the first time on records — we find the structural power, the resolute energy, and the technical mas-

tery of Brahms' music clearly set forth and charged with fervor and brilliance. Mr. Stokowski went to great pains — I am given to understand — to have eveything "come-off" in the best possible manner in this recording, and the R. C. A. Victor spared neither effort nor expense to assist the conductor in realizing all his desires. When I say that the cost of this recording ran into five figures, the second of which was not a zero — some idea of the expense involved can be gained.

Perhaps the greatest event in the career of Johannes Brahms was the production of his *First Symphony*, which did not materialize until 1876 — in his forty-third year. Very little is known about the composition of this work. Brahms cherished a secret desire to write a symphony from his early twenties, but wisely waited until his judgment in such matters had more fully matured. Some authorities state that the inception of the work first took shape in his twenty-second year, but the earliest proof of the symphony's actual existence dates from seven years later, at which time Brahms is known to have shown his initial sketch of the first movement to his friends Clara Schumann and Albert Dietrich. It was Clara Schumann, incidently, who influenced him in the final re-shaping of part of the work.

When this symphony was first performed, Brahms' musical admirers and friends hailed it with much enthusiasm, and one proclaimed it as proof of Brahms' close "affinity with Beethoven." There were plenty, however, who were also opposed to it; a condition which prevailed for many years. It would be interesting to trace the appreciative development of this work with the public during its sixty years of existence. Everyone is familiar with von Buelow's often misquoted reference to Brahms' *First as* Beethoven's *Tenth*, a statement which was not meant to be taken as literally, as it too often is, that is in the numerical sense. " . . . I should put it (Brahms' *First*) between the *Second* and the '*Eroica*'," von Buelow actually said following his reference to the work as the *Tenth* of Beethoven.

In this new recording, Stokowski has wisely dropped his former "fade-in" and "fade-out" system between sides. A "fade-out" was never, however, objectionable. It was the "fade-in" which really offended. It proved almost anti-climatic, for psychologically it gave one a similar feeling to that engendered by the singer who *portamentos* into a tone. I believe Mr. Stokowski would do well to restore the "fade-out" in his recordings, and start on the reverse face at precisely the point where that "fade-out" was begun. The breaks in this new set are excellent chosen, better — as a matter of fact — than in any other recording of this work issued to date.

Stokowski paces his introduction to the first movement faster than do several German conductors — for example, Furtwaengler and Klemperer. *Un poco sostenuto*, however, does not necessarily mean *Adagio*, and since Stokowski establishes the architectural grandeur and the power and strength of this opening in a most impressive manner, he proves the verity of his timing. His playing of the first movement proper, and also of the last movement, is filled with unusual fluency.

Stokowski gives us a feeling of longer lines in Brahms' music than do most Teutonic conductors, and a buoyancy — particularly in the first movement — which is consistent with the emotional quintessence of the music and for that reason is most welcome. All in all, this is a splendid set — one from which many hours of pleasurable experience will be engendered.

—P. H. R.

* * * *

BEETHOVEN: *Coriolan Overture*, played by the B. B. C. Symphony Orchestra, Adrian Boult conducting. Victor disc No. 11909, price $2.00.

A FEW words is all that is required to adjudge the essential value of this new recording of Beethoven's *Coriolon Overture*, by Adrian Boult and the B. B. C. Symphony Orchestra. The performance is indeed a vigorous and sanguine one, but, unfortunately, the intense dramatic force, the suspense of mood — such integral parts of Beethoven's music — is emasculated by a somewhat arbitrary regard both for tempi and dynamics. Boult's rendition is, of course, superior to the older version by Pablo Casals (Victor); and the recording is much more vivified than Mengelberg's reading (Columbia); but, in spite of the better phonographic means at Boult's disposal, his reading — though strong and well emphasized — cannot be considered an inspired one.

—W. K.

* * * *

WALDTEUFEL: *Waldteufel waltz potpourri* (Arr. Silbermann); played by Marek Weber and His Orchestra. Victor disc, No. 36178, price $1.25.

SWING may come and the rumba may go, but the waltz is ever with us. Except for the works of the younger Strauss, no waltzes

are so perennially popular as those of his Parisian contemporary, Emil Waldteufel. This recording, of course, is frankly a hodge-podge. The favorites are here -- *Estudiantina, The skaters, Tres joli, Fruehlingskinder, Espana, Dolores* — but only enough of each to remind us of the composer's fertility. Needless to say, the arrangement is cleverly made, and the Weber Orchestra plays it in the best continental fashion. A good record for dancers in a sentimental and reminiscent mood.

—P. M.

* * * *

ROSSINI: *William Tell Overture* (3 parts); and HANDEL: *Musette and Minuet* from Ballet Suites arranged by Beecham; played by London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia Set No. X-60, two discs, price $3.00

ROSSINI'S *William Tell Overture,* "believe it or not", acquires the prominence of an album and rightfully too — for the present performance is the best we have ever had on records. Beecham and Toscanini seem to share a predilection for the music of Rossini; and both of these conductors lavish upon it the same detailed care and attention that they give to the music of Beethoven and Mozart. Beecham creates the mood of the opening section in this recording in an unforgettable manner — giving more than a hint of the mystery of Dawn — and also that of the storm music which has been compared to the similar section of Beethoven in the *Pastoral Symphony.* The whole performance has been welded in a most masterful way. Whether or not one admires this ubiquitious "war-horse" — which bandmasters throughout the world loudly exploit to the general detriment of its best features — we believe you will agree with us if you listen to this recording that this overture has been rightfully acclaimed as a masterpiece.

The two Handel excerpts are delightful, but far removed from the music of Rossini.

—P. G.

* * * *

WOLF-FERRARI: *Jewels of the Madonna, Intermezzo No.* 1. Victor disc No. 1742, 10-inch, price $1.50.

WOLF-FERRARI: *Jewels of the Madonna, Intermezzo* No. 2; and DELIBES: *Coppelia—Valse and Entra'acte.* Victor disc No. 1743, 10-inch, price $1.50.

Both played by the Minneapolis Orchestra, direction Eugene Ormandy.

PIERNE: *March of the Little Lead Soldiers,* and SCHUBERT (Arr. Guiraud): *Marche Militaire;* played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, direction Arthur Fielder. Victor disc No. 4314, 10-inch, price $1.00.

STRAUSS (Johann): *Citronen Waltz;* played by Boston "Pops" Orchestra; direction Arthur Fiedler. Victor disc No. 11894, price $1.50.

THE two *intermezzi* from the *Jewels of the Madonna* have become very popular, and are now heard frequently on popular orchestral programs. It is less desirable to have the nostalgic first *Intermezzo* divided than to have it played on one side of a twelve-inch disc. Ormandy plays these popular selections without exaggerating their sentiment, and the recording is top-notch.

Fiedler likes to squeeze the last drop out of all popular selections. Recently, we noted this in his recording of an Elgar *Pomp and Circumstance March* and also the *Grand March* from Verdi's *Aida.* He has a tendency to drive his men upon occasion, which does not make for the best resiliency. One suspects he feels the old tunes need a bit of added "vim, vigor and vitality." Perhaps he's right, there's no denying they need something for a whole lot of people, for human nature varies and some of us outgrow certain things too quickly. The recording here is excellent and a big asset in range and dynamics.

—P. G.

CHAMBER MUSIC

PURCELL: *Nine four-part Fantasias, the five-part Fantasia on one note, the 'Golden' Sonata, three Songs, and two Catches.* Performed by the International String Quartet, Keith Faulkner and St. George Singers. The English Music Society, Volume One. Recorded by English Columbia. Three ten inch discs, and five 12-inch discs, price $17.50.

PURCELL is often cited as England's Bach. He is by many considered the greatest of the English Tudor composers. And yet—in England as much as elsewhere—his music has been practically unknown to amateur and professional musician. He has been unfortunately merely a name to most people — a name important from a historical standpoint — but that is largely as far as it has gone. C. W. Orr, writing in *The Gramophone* recently, states that a noted German critic one remarked in reply to an English critic's eulogies of Bach: "You English are always talking about Bach. Why don't you study your own Purcell a little more?" Apparently

the idea has taken seed, for two English companies have each advanced a Purcell album — the present one and another (issued by English Decca) containing a complete recording of Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas.* (A survey of this album will appear in an early issue.)

That the German critic was right in his observation, few of us will refute after listening to the *Fantasias,* for in them Purcell exhibits inspirational resources and splendid craftsmanship predictive of Bach who was not born until five years after their creation. His polyphony is both fluent and integrated in construction. The voice of Bach seems to be speaking to us upon occasion in these *Fantasias,* and likewise the voice of Beethoven. These pieces are truly music of inspiration apart from their form and texture — music that is particularly pleasurable in repetition. The International String Quartet give us eloquent performances of them.

The *'Golden' Sonata* has long been quoted in musical histories as a representative work of the composer, but after the *Fantasias* it seems less significant, and save for the last movement, not most representative of Purcell. The songs, all unfamiliar ones, are on the other hand most important. For, their linear fluency is both distinctive and unusual. They are beautifully sung by Mr. Faulkner. The *Catches* are the sort of music that was once sung in taverns and public places where good old English ale and famous punch brews set all the company singing. They prove the musical "skill of the plain man of those days."

The recording in this set is vital and realistic.

This is a society set, which can be procured by the reader through any reputable dealer at the price quoted. Because of its importance, we hope that it will not be confined to so-called subscribers but will in due course of time be released to the general public.

—P. H. R.

* * * *

SCHUBERT: *String Quartet in A Minor, Opus* 29 (7 parts), and *Quartet in C Minor* (*Quartet Satz*) (1 part); played by the Kolisch Quartet. Columbia Set No. 245, four discs, price $6.00.

THE Kolisch's performance of the familiar *A Minor,* one of Schubert's most representative and universally beloved chamber music compositions, is a clear-cut, tonally glowing one. This performance reminds one

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  PAGANINI - Kreisler — La Campanella
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- **SMETANA—From My Homeland (II)** **CHOPIN** (Trans. Milstein) — **Nocturne in C Sharp Minor** — (Record No. 68480D)

COLUMBIA proudly presents the first recordings of the accomplished young Russian virtuoso — who recently completed a most successful concert tour in this country. This initial group — chosen to represent Mr. Milstein's versatility — are representative of his extensive repertoire.

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of a carefully wrought frieze — unquestionably chiselled by a master hand — prominent in highlights, but unfortunately — at the same time — somewhat lacking in finer shadings. The Kolisch Quartet, which performs all compositions without the music before them, have an unified tonal texture that is unusually intensified. For this reason, their performance of the *A Minor* is considerably more brilliant and — one is tempted to say— more burnished than that given by the Budapest String Quartet — where the fervor and warmth of the music was not advanced by any virtuosity. There is no question that this organization's comprehension of the composer's idiom is both veritable and profound, so whether or no their performance will prove more ultimately satisfying than that of the Budapest's will be up to the individual listener. And since both sets are competently performed and similarly recorded, the prospective purchaser would do well to hear them both before buying.

At this point, it might be well to remind the reader that this quartet is one of Schubert's most engaging contributions to that form. For in it, we find the simple sincerity and profound feelings of the composer manifesting themselves again and again in tunes that never grow old, outmoded, or stale. The haunting, nostalgic ecstacy of the opening movement, alternating so effectively between minor and major, the tender *Andante* with its ingenious counterpoint and its thrice familiar tune which forms the principal subject (also utilized by the composer in the *Second Interlude* of his *Rosamunde* music, and again in slightly altered form in the *Impromptu* for piano in *B Flat*), the charming Viennese menuet and the gay finale (so unmistakably Schubertian) give us a work which is unquestionably appealing.

The *Quartet Satz* is an arresting movement from an unfinished quartet of Schubert. It is excellently played by the Kolisch's.

—P. H. R.

CONCERTOS

BRAHMS: *Concerto No. 2 in B Flat Major* (Piano and Orchestra); played by Artur Schnabel and the B. B. C. Orchestra, direction Adrian Boult. Victor Set M305, six discs, price $12.00.

TWO major works of Brahms this month, both of which are superbly interpreted and recorded. It almost seems too much. If one is a Brahms' enthusiast, the strain on the pocketbook is going to be enormous, because really one will not wish to forego either of these two sets — that of the *First Symphony* or this of the *Second Piano Concerto* — and a choice between them is assuredly going to be a very difficult one to make.

As a recording of a piano concerto — this is about the most perfect we have ever had. Its uniformity, its tonal realism and its dynamic range are excellently realized. This is not to say that a wider range could not have been utilized for the realization of greater verity and realism, for such is not the case, but within the range of recordings — as they are being made today — and judged along side of the best of these, this set emerges for its unusual merits and worth.

The balance attained in this recording can be traced in part to Brahms and the significance and aim of this work which was that of the concerto for orchestra and piano in the fullest sense of the word. Brahms did not plan this work along the lines of those in which the pianist is the dominating feature — the soloist *per se* — even though he is the featured instrumentalist. There are no virtuoso elements to this work; for that reason it is a difficult concerto for the artist — one which "calls for blood and sweat" on his part to make it live and *sound*. It is to Artur Schnabel's everlasting credit that he gives as fine a performance on records of this work as of any he has made to date.

The first recording of this concerto, made about six years ago, was one of the most disappointing releases of a major Brahms work ever issued. Rubinstein, the pianist, gave a performance in which the instinctive significance of this music's style was missing. His remarkable technical skill was not lacking, but in this case it was misapplied— for his playing — despite all its vital efficiency — was wanting in inwardness and imagination. Nor were the personalities of Coates, the conductor, and Rubinstein ideally mated — as a matter of fact this was a last minute partnership, due to the fact that the conductor slated for the job walked out at the eleventh hour because of some difference with those in charge of recording, and Coates was asked to take over a task for which he had made no preparation in order to "save the day."

The *B Flat Concerto* is an expression of Brahms the romantic, and despite his efforts to cover his romanticism up by formal workmanship — such as we encounter in much of the first movement, we nevertheless are aware of the romantic genesis of the music. The end of the development section (side

three of the recording) where the piano is heard in arpeggios and in broken chords through the strings is a case in point — and one, incidently — which Schnabel makes us most pleasantly aware of by his apprehending performance. The second movement of the concerto has been termed an anomaly. There is no denying that it offers a contrast between the formal first movement and the almost religious slow movement. Brahms undoubtedly conceived it as a *scherzo* to keep it as much as possible in the symphonic vein — since in this work he sought to create a piano concerto and a symphony simultaneously. Schnabel makes much of this *scherzo* — more than most pianists do — that is in the strictly musical sense by virtue of his substantial attributes as an interpreter.

The slow movement is one of the most beautiful that Brahms ever conceived. In it, he displays his fondness for romantic dreaming. It has been said that the enchantment of an Italian spring inspired this work — a fact that we can hardly refute when listening to this movement. The opening section recalls the composer's song *Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer,* Opus 105. It is truly devotional, tender and deeply sensitive. The clarinet solo (middle of the second record) has been aptly termed "prayerful", it is a singing melody of delicate sensibility that Brahms re-used in his song *Todessehnen,* Opus 86. The finale is fittingly marked *Allegretto grazioso,* for the animated graciousness of this movement, its charm and pensive carefreeness is thus correctly described. One wishes that Schnabel stressed more of its sprightly benignity, and were a little less deliberate here; but perhaps the "Hungarian" spirit of the music evades him. On the other hand, this too can be over-stressed.

Boult and the B. B. C. Orchestra give admirable cooperation to Schnabel. So, all in all, we have a truly first rate rendition of one of Brahms' most admirable works.

—P. H. R.

PIANO

FAURE: *Dolly;* played by Anita Siegel and Babeth Leonet, piano duet. One twelve-inch and one ten-inch Columbia disc, Nos. 9103M and 4120M, price $3.50.

WHEN a great composer turns his thoughts to the children the results are often wholly delightful. Perhaps it is then that he shows his true nature. Debussy with his *Children's Corner,* Ravel with his *Mother Goose,* Schumann and the *Kinderscenen,* Humperdinck, whose fame rests securely on *Haensel und Gretel* — even Wagner celebrating the birth of his son with the *Siegfried-Idyll* — all have contributed to the musical heritage of childhood. Nevertheless, though these works belong properly to the child world, it is an exceptional child, indeed, who can take any part in performing them. It is in this that Fauré's delightful *Dolly* stands apart: for here is music within the comprehension as well as the technical powers of the child performer. This is not meant to imply that the two children who play the suite for us on these two records are not exceptional. Both in their early teens, and pupils of the distinguished pianist, Marguerite Long, they

ARTUR SCHNABEL

reflect glory on their teacher as well as themselves. One feels that the music should be played by children, and that if once or twice a little finger strikes a note less clearly than it might, or if in one spot there is a pedal effect hardly played by Fauré, or if there is a feeling of determination in the rhythmic pulsation, that everything still is just as it should be.

As for the music itself, it should appeal to everyone. Written in 1893, and labeled Op 56, it is a sort of interlude in the work of the composer. In one respect the suite is unique in Fauré, for nowhere else has he given titles to his piano pieces, preferring such generic names as *Ballade, Barcarolle, Impromptu* or *Nocturne.* The little *Berceuse,* with which the work opens, is perhaps the gem of the set. Here is truly heart-warming melody. *Mi-a-ou*

is a little waltz, full of humor, while *Le jardin de Dolly* is a dreamy affair containing an amusing reminder of the first *Violin Sonata*, and the *Kitty Waltz* is an airy trifle. The Schumannesque *Tendresse* is the least satisfactory part of the performance, as one might have expected. Finally, the *Pas espagnol*, which might be a sort of *Hommage a Chabrier*, brings the little work to a quite brilliant close. Truly a recording to hear and to own.

—P. M.

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IBERT: *Le petit ane blanc*, and *Le marchande d' eau fraiche;* played by Emma Boynet (piano). Victor disc, No. 4315, 10-inch, price $1.00.

JACQUES IBERT has given us considerable serious music, for which he has earned his quota of praise, but it is perhaps his little *Histoires* which have made his name known in America. These ten *Stories* are short and unpretentious, but they reveal a wealth of humor and color. The composer is said to have had in mind certain incidents on his travels in Italy, Spain and Asia, but he has attempted to suggest rather than narrate his tales. It is interesting to find him following the example of Debussy in his *Preludes*, by placing his titles at the ends rather than at the beginnings of the pieces.

Of course *Le petit ane blanc* (The little white donkey) has been recorded a number of times before, by such artists as Novaes, Moiseivitch and Hilsberg, and in transcription by the cellist Maréchal and the harpsichordist Lestangs. *Le marchande d' eau fraiche* (The fresh water pedlar) is less familiar, but equally attractive. Emma Boynet is a pianist of distinction, well-known in France not only as a concert artist, but as assistant to the great pedagogue, Philipp, at the Paris Conservatoire. She has the humor and understanding to make these miniatures interesting, and her reading has been, so to speak, "well-preserved."

—P. M.

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POULENC: *Pastorel and Toccata*, and DEBUSSY: *Etude XI Pour Les Arpeges Composes* (*Study in Arpeggios*), played by Vladimir Horowitz, piano. Victor disc No. 8996, price $2.00.

IT is a curious feeling to listen to compositions by a man who, during the course of his life, has built up a hectic reputation as an *enfant terrible* of modern music, and discover that, after all, these pieces are really delightful, simple, excursions into poetic moods. Of course, the *Pastourel* and the *Toccata* are not the most representative of Poulen's characteristic elfinish talent — for that we must go to his *Cocardes* (songs for male voices to poems by Jean Cocteau), his *Sonata for Clarinet and Bassoon*, and other works of similar "circus-like" qualities; but these two piano pieces are genuine examples and represent, in their essential treatment, something of Poulenc's humorous and delicate character.

The *Pastourel* is based on an old French folk-song, reminding one of Couperin in the manner in which it is handled. The theme is a simple yet moody melody which Poulenc treats with occasional satiric thrusts. The *Toccata*, conversely, is a brilliant piece, full of bite, which recalls the general mood of Debussy in treatment and of Scarlatti, II, as a formal model.

Debussy's *Etude* — the 11th from his 12 studies in which the composer sought to exploit the possibilities of a new pianism along old technical formulae — is a "Study in Arpeggios." It is a fascinating piece of music: solidly constructed, technically, and of a general brooding mood, emotionally The atmosphere suggested by the music is a coolness, a carefully studied quality, which borders too closely upon the cerebral, yet there is an unmistakable warmth, a color, which is typical of the best of Debussy's unique genius. In comparison to Poulenc's two pieces— with its youthful verve and its almost careless fanciful flights — the *Etude* appears somewhat pale and formalized. However, if the listener likes playing that is superb; if he likes music that is full of vigor and colorfulness — then here is his record. It would be superfluous to comment on the execution of Horowitz, who appears in his usual brilliant stride. The recording also is in keeping with the lucid qualities of the music and the performance.

—W. K.

VIOLIN

VITALI: *Chaconne* (3 parts); and BACH: *Adagio from Unaccompanied Sonata No. 1 in G Minor*. Columbia Set X61, 2 discs, price $3.00.

VIVALDI: *Sonata in D Major* (Arr. by Respighi). Columbia disc No. 68478D, price $1.50.

PAGANINI: *La Campanella* (*Rondo from Concerto No. 2*) (Arr. by Kreisler); and LISZT: *Consolation No. 3* (Trans. Milstein). Columbia disc No. 68479D, price $1.50.

SMETANA: *Aus der Heimat* (2); and CHOPIN: *Nocturne in C Sharp Minor, Posth.* (Trans. by Milstein). Columbia disc 68480D, price $1.50.
All played by Nathan Milstein with Leopold Mittmann at the piano.

THE important debut of Nathan Milstein, the celebrated young Russian violinist, on discs, assumes the proportions of a veritable violin recital. The wide variety of compositions — which he has recorded — signifies that the recording company under whose auspices Milstein makes his gramophonic bow decided perhaps that the only way to reveal the myriad gifts of their newly acquired member was to show him off in the performance of different works. Aside of this being something of a musical feast, the idea itself is singular, for there are many persons who have already become warm admirers of this phenomenal young violinist since his appearance in America several years ago, and specifically since his sensational playing with Toscanini and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra in Carnegie Hall some weeks back. These persons will, no doubt, conceive the plan of presenting an entire violin recital by Milstein on discs right in their own homes!

Certainly the music which Milstein has chosen to play would convince any incredulous person that he is an interpretive artist of no mean ability. His rendition of Vitali and Vivaldi, to cite the two most violinistic composers of the lot, reveals an artistry of high and incomparable order. The *Chaconne* by Vitali has long been a favorite work with violinists, not only because it is a difficult composition technically, but is a work of supreme musical accomplishment. The work is by no means a simple essay in technique, but requires from the performer a high degree of musicianship as well as finger and bow dexterity. That Milstein is heir to marvelous technical gifts goes without saying.

To speak collectively — the performance of all the foregoing works is indeed worthy, and is in keeping with Milstein's artistry. The Vitali work is a happy addition to the growing store of classical literature, and, though not new to records, is much more up-to-date as regards gramophonic perfection, and of higher excellence pertaining to tech-

New Victor Records ☆ ☆ ☆

IT is fitting that the month of May, the birth-month of Johannes Brahms, should be chosen for the release of a generous representation of music by the great German master.

Artur Schnabel, renowned pianist, plays the **B Flat Major Concerto**—that intensely beautiful work of such tremendous scope as to have been called the "symphony with piano obbligato." Schnabel gives a magnificent performance in the masterpiece set M-305.

Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra, famous for their playing of the Brahms **C Minor Symphony,** have made a new recording (M-301) of this great favorite. If you can imagine so effective a combination as Stokowski's reading of this beloved score and the response of the artists who play it, plus the vitality of the new Victor Higher Fidelity recording, you will have in small measure an idea of how glorious this music really is. But words to describe it are futile. You must **hear** the recording to fully realize its greatness . . . to appreciate Stokowski's inspiration . . . to experience the thrill of phrases beautifully moulded, delicately polished, reproduced with a veracity that is almost unbelievable. This is a recording **par excellence** . . . one that will give you something new to enjoy every time you play it.

VICTOR RECORDS
RCA Victor Division
RCA Mfg. Co., Inc.
Camden, New Jersey

nical artistry. A word about the composer reveals that, like the eminent Bach and Scarlatti families, the name Vitali has long been associated with the activities of music. It is, however, Tommaso Antonio Vitali who lived in the middle of the 17th Century, who has achieved the greater measure of fame, and, of all his works, the *Ciaccona* (as it is originally known) for violin solo and figured bass has done much to consolidate his fame as a violin composer. Milstein plays this work with sympathy and technical assurance, and succeeds in making us realize why it has evoked such high commendation from violinists and critics. The odd side is devoted to a Bach *Adagio,* which, though executed with a fine apprehension of linear form, Milstein does not seem to penetrate very deeply into the meaning and essence of the music. It is a commendable interpretation, but his playing, in this work, is not defined by very deep inspiration.

The Vivaldi *Sonata in D Major,* arranged by the late Respighi, is a brilliant affair, particularly for the violinist. It is in this work that Milstein reveals his greatest gifts as an interpreter. His tone is full and sonorous, uncorrupted by personal mannerisms or eccentricities. He adheres closely to the spirit of the music, and his only desire is to evoke for us the splendid musicianship of Vivaldi. The *Sonata* itself is a revealing piece of music, in keeping with the unique genius of this master whom Bach, in his earlier years, studied so avidly. Leopold Mittmann, the accompanist, proves himself in this, as well as in all the other works, an able and trustworthy auxiliary.

In contrast to these two *classical* works we have an opportunity to listen to Milstein in the interpretative role of different kind of music. His playing of Smetana's *Aus der Heimat* — with its deeply touching poetry — is indeed beautiful. He reveals to us the doleful character of the music, its rich colors, its melancholy, yet never touching the fringes of sentimentality. There is no "squeezing out" of the melody, no over-emphasis of the theme. The music has its say, and he, understanding the rich character of Smetana as a folk-song composer, lets the music sing with him. With the Paganini *La Campanella* (arranged for the violin by Kreisler) there is little to comment. A difficult work, Milstein plays it with gusto and facility. It is a piece of violin wizardry, and under the agile fingers of the executant it becomes a dazzling technical essay.

The Chopin *Nocturne* and the Liszt *Consolation No.* 3 (both originally for piano) are projected with the kind of temperament and feeling required of the music. It must be said, however, that the *Nocturne* is a worthy transcription, which beauty, when translated by the violin, did much to dissipate the natural animosity of the present reviewer for transcriptions of this nature. It is hard to condone the attitude of certain violinists who must go to piano music to enrich violin material. Violin literature is quite full without the necessity of invading the sacrosanct sphere of the piano; and such transcriptions as the *Consolation* and the *Nocturne* add little to the essential value of the music by being transferred to the violin. Instead of the music being inegrated, firmly knit together as they are on the piano, they become loose and disjointed when divided between piano and violin. The violin, at best, can do nothing more than articulate the main melodic theme with the piano filling in as background. Conversely, on the piano, this self-same theme undergoes necessary musical alteration, appearing in various guises both in the bass and treble. This change, obviously, breaks the monotony of the single theme and adduces new color and variation to the melody. Be this as it may, both pieces are projected in the romantic spirit in which they were conceived, and Milstein does not attempt to "gush" when he plays them.

The impression of Milstein as a recording artist is on the whole very favorable. He records exceedingly well. His violin tone is veraciously reproduced on the discs and his technical powers are articulated with the desired vivified effect. It is not presumptuous to mention at this time that, having had the pleasure of hearing Milstein play the colorful Goldmark *Violin Concerto* some years ago, we hope he will consider making this rare and beautiful work available for us on discs.

—W. K.

CELLO

WEBER: *Adagio* and *Rondo* (Arr. Piatigorsky); and FRANCOEUR: *Largo* and *Vivo;* played by Gregor Piatigorsky, 'cello, with piano accompaniment. Victor disc, No. 8995, price $2.00.

ONE hears a great deal about the paucity of 'cello literature. While there is room for some argument as to whether all the resources have really been tapped, one can

hardly take exception to effective transcriptions especially of music otherwise unknown. Piatigorsky seems to be an active transcriber with an affection for Weber — of whose music he has already given us one recorded sample. Now, on this new disc, he plays two short movements from the set of *Six progressive sonatas for pianoforte and violin obbligato,* "dediée aux amateurs." The *sonatas* are Nos. 100 - 105 in the Jaehns index, and were composed in 1810. The *Adagio* given here is from No. 100, in C Minor — a brooding, melancholy movement; the *Rondo,* from No. 101, in D Major, is bright and airy.

Francoeur, though unknown to most of us as a protegé of Mr. Kreisler, wrote some very real music on his own account. We are not told whether these two movements also were transcribed by Mr. Piatigorsky, but it seems rather more than likely. The *Largo* is a *Sarabande* from the composer's fourth *Sonata* for violin, one of those noble, broad and dignified melodies of which the eighteenth century composers had the secret. The *Vivo* is presumably also from a violin *Sonata.* It makes an effective contrast, but is hardly very important on its own account.

Piatigorsky's tone bears a resemblance to that of Casals, and he plays these pieces with love and understanding. He is given good support by an unnamed pianist. The recording, while clear, has not the expansiveness of the best recent releases.

—P. M.

VOCAL

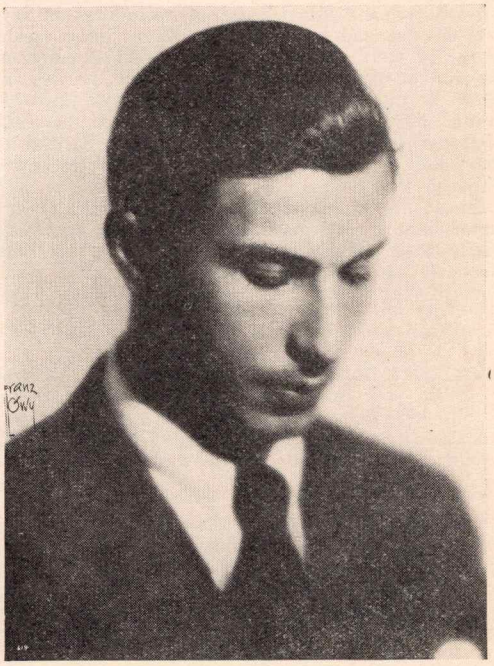
BRAHMS: *Wiegenlied, Vergebliches Staendchen, Nachtigall,* and *Der Jaeger,* sung by Elisabeth Schumann, with George Reeves at the piano. Victor disc No. 1756, 10-inch, price $1.50.

THE novelty of this new record by Elisabeth Schumann is the acquisition, for the first time on the phonograph according to available information, of the delightful little song *Der Jaeger.* A happy maiden boasts of the winning ways of her huntsman lover, his knowledge of the devious recesses of the forest, and her fixed resolve that he must approach her only by way of the church-door. Brahms used a popular dance air for his setting of this lyric from Halm's dramatic poem *Wildfeuer.* Mme. Schumann sings it with engaging lightness. The song is in mood not dissimilar to the *Vergebliches Staendchen,* where the singer makes a nice differentation in the verses of the dialogue.

The *Cradle-Song* has been sung with a steadier vocal line, and Mme. Gerhardt, among others, has given more of the ecstasy of the sweet pain of *Nachtigall.* But Mme. Schumann lends both these songs the refinements and vocal mannerisms which move her many admirers to perceive perfection in her every phrase.

George Reeves' neat accompaniments and the recording merit favorable mention.

—A. P. D.



NATHAN MILSTEIN

VERDI: *Highlights from Aida.* Victor Set M303, four 12-inch and two 10-inch Victor discs, price $10.00.

THIS album is assuredly an anomaly which brings to mind Proust's phrase *a la recherche du temps perdu.* Perhaps lagging sales have induced Victor to delve into its archives for outstanding *Aida* recordings that might be sold in a bunch at bargain prices. The result is a mélange with three Aidas, three Rhadameses, and assemblage of orchestras, etc., all good in the various ways.

At the start we greet the doctored Caruso *Celeste Aida,* a fine experiment in re-recording an incomparable voice with a very noticeably later orchestra not at all times synchronous. Rosa Ponselle's competent *Ritorna*

(*Continued on Page* 30)

In the Popular Vein

By VAN

BALLROOM DANCE

AAAA—*You,* and *You Never Looked So Beautiful Before,* both from *The Great Ziegfeld.* Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra. Victor 25291.

This grand record is almost swingy enough to deserve inclusion in the Hot Jazz column, but whatever you choose to call it, it is one of the most irresistibly toe-tickling brace of recordings in several months, and helps, along with his other recent *Grade A* work, to place Dorsey's emphatically on the top shelf of bands that play hot as well as sweet. If the Goodman influence shows a little bit around the edges, it's certainly a fault in the right direction and entirely creditable unless carried to the point of slavish imitation, which is extremely unlikely with a man of Dorsey's originality and musicianship at the helm. Like Goodman, Dorsey suffers not at all from any false modesty regarding his prowess on his chosen instrument, so that both sides are agreeably sprinkled with the sort of trombone playing that Dorsey alone is capable of giving us.

* * * *

AAAA—*It's Got To Be Love,* and *There's a Small Hotel,* both from *On Your Toes.* Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra. Victor 25270.

AAAA—*Quiet Night,* and *On Your Toes,* both from *On Your Toes.* Ruby Newman and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7633.

The most recent musical show of the season, *On Your Toes,* also gives promise of being the most successful, and these two discs bring us the first recordings from its witty Rodgers-Hart score. Frankly, although the show seems certain of a long and highly prosperous run, I regard the tunes of Richard Rodgers as being no better than fair, although the Lorenz Hart lyrics have plenty of bite to them and compare quite favorably with anything he has done to date. But inasmuch as you'll probably be getting them anyhow, you might as well get the best recordings, and these are both definitely first-rate. Whiteman's job on *It's Got To Be Love* is particularly persuasive, although the similarity of the tune itself to Arthur Schwartz's *She Loves Me Not* may annoy you, and I fear the less said about the *Small Hotel* thing on the reverse, with a perfectly frightful vocal by Durelle Alexander, the better. Ruby Newman's disc is his first recording work done since the batch he made for Victor about a year ago, and he handles the assignment nicely, ably assisted by that invariably effective vocalist, Buddy Clark.

* * * *

AAA—*Tormented,* and *Every Once In a While.* Richard Himber and his Orchestra. Victor 25293.

One is quite prepared to learn that *Tormented* is the work of Will Hudson, since its construction is almost precisely the same as that of his own *Moonglow,* both of which are, of course, more or less filched from Ellington. Anyhow, it's a very sweet tune indeed which the versatile Himber handles in a manner befitting the superior quality of the number. The nefarious influence of swing is noted on the opposite side, where the normally sedate Himber almost succeeds in "getting off" like his rowdier confreres, the Messrs. Dorsey and Goodman.

* * * *

AAA—*Clementine,* and *My Pretty Girl.* Jean Goldkette and his Orchestra. Victor 25271.

This disc apparently betokens a policy on Victor's part of re-issuing from time to time some of the historically important discs whose "masters" repose in their vaults, although long since out of print. Goldkette's discs of from eight to ten years ago are of immeasurable importance today, since nearly every musician who later attained eminence in the swing field played on them at one time or another. They were likewise years ahead of their time in conception and are almost alone among records dating from this period (with a few notable exceptions) in that they may be listened to today with a pleasure not altogether that of an antiquarian. Aside from the general excellence of these records, as records, their chief interest lies in their containing some of the very best work of the lamented Bix Beiderbecke. It is sincerely to be hoped that Victor may find it expedient to continue its resuscitation of deserving old-timers, along with the very creditable practice of including the personnel on the label.

* * * *

AA—*Lost,* and *No Greater Love.* Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians. Victor 25271.

Sugar Stick Lombardo ,as he is affectionately known to our English cousins, may not be as prodigiously popular today as he was a few years back, but he is still important enough commercially to warrant occasional mention in a department of this sort, if only because he makes it possible for the recorders to experiment with such commercially dubious material as *Reminiscing in Tempo,* or the *Mezz Mezzow* discs, through the consistently good sales which his discs enjoy. These recordings show little or no deviation from the manner which he has been employing for years, and he is very wise in adhering to it for as long as he is able to get away with it. Even Brother Carmen and his griping vocals seem to have their public still, and it would be a shame to keep them from each other.

HOT JAZZ

AAAA—*Christopher Columbus,* and *Get Happy.* Benny Goodman and his Orchestra. Victor 25279.

Christopher Columbus is one of those slightly screwy musical concoctions that the bands instantly fall in love with and play so persistently that the public thinks it must be good, even if they don't like it. Goodman very naturally gives us the definitive version of this curious classic of the Harlem hot-spots, but the customary Goodman superlatives must be reserved for the opposite side. Here, in a blazing performance of Harold Arlen's swell *Get Happy,* Goodman gives us a job of work which I feel quite certain could not be duplicated by any

other band in the country. The sheer dynamic sock of this recording is electrifying and the record from first to last is an eloquent example of a perfectly functioning organization at its best.

* * * *

AAAA—*I'se A-Muggin'*, in *Two Parts*. The Teagarden Boys and the Trumbauer Swing Band. Victor 25273.

Students of social trends, etc., should find plenty of material to work on in the success of such nut-house nifties as *I'se A-Muggin'*. If you've already heard it, you won't need to have it described to you, and if you have not heard it, you wouldn't believe our description of it anyway, so let's content ourselves with terming it the illegitimate offspring of an African tribal chant and the multiplication table. And if you're not frightened by the definitely pathological connotations of the whole business, you'll have a roaring good time with *les freres* Teagarden in their efforts to keep the minds of the swing fans off their more mundane problems.

* * * *

AAA—*I Know That You Know*, and *If I Could Be With You*. Benny Goodman and his Orchestra. Victor 25290.

More Goodmania of the frist water, with Goodman himself grabbing most of the honors with his continuously miraculous clarinet work. His beauty of tone and flawlessness of execution is taken for granted, but how he can turn out record after record, year after year, and always give us the sense of inevitability in his work which is the hallmark of great art is a never ending source of wonder. Extravagant praise, possibly, for a mere clarinet player, but if anyone in America has tried to elevate the business of playing hot choruses to something resembling artistry that man is Goodman, and the tremendous popular success which seems to be coming his way is one which he richly deserves.

* * * *

AAA—*Christopher Columbus*, and *All My Life*. Teddy Wilson and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7640.

All My Life is one of those tunes which have something in their content or construction which appeals particularly strongly to the colored bands and this is but the first of what will probably be a lengthy list of hot recordings on a tune that is essentially a sweet ballad. Aside from Wilson's fluent and intriguing piano acrobatics, the feature of the disc is the vocal of Ella Fitzgerald, talented colored singer, heard frequently on the air, but not previously on discs, as far as I know. She is one of the several hundred singers who are imitating, whether consciously or not, the vocal method of Miss Billie Halliday and seems to be the most successful.

Swing Music Notes

By ENZO ARCHETTI

Before anything else I want to apologize for an error in last month's *Notes*. In mentioning the all-star colored band which would record for Brunswick with Teddy Wilson as pianist, Jelly-Roll Morton was named as a member of the personnel. Benny. and not Jelly-Roll, was intended, of course. The complete line-up of this new orchestra is: Benny Morton, trombone; Frankie Newton, trumpet; Jerry Blake, first sax; Ted McCrea, tenor sax; John Trueheart, guitar; Stan Fields, bass; Cosey Cole, drums; Teddy Wilson, piano; and Ella Fitzgerald, vocals. John Hammond had much to do with the creation of this new band.

An excellent swing program on the air is that by a band which calls itself the *Top Hatters* on Station KYW, relayed thru WEAF, on Saturday afternoons from 3:00 to 3:30 P. M., EST. It's first program some weeks ago was announced under the title of *Let's Swing* and, by way of introduction, attempts were made by the announcer and various persons interviewed to explain swing. The success of this feature was no better than any other attempts along these lines. Since then the program has contented itself with just swinging, without explantations, and is improved greatly. This is a program well worth while listening to.

Even though no one can explain it satisfactorily, the popularity of swing music on the air has grown tremendously in the last few months. Nearly every orchestra, at least once during its program, tries a swing number. The genuine swing bands, who formerly very timidly presented only a number or two during an hour's playing, now let loose wholeheartedly. Which is all very nice and very satisfactory for the lover of swing music. But doesn't it begin to sound too much like a fad? Fads in America, are notoriously short-lived. Do you remember *The Music Goes 'Round and Around*, crossword puzzles, chain letters, and jig-saw puzzles? What will happen when the ordinary radio listener and record buyer, to whom swing music has been but a change from the vacuous music of Wayne King's and Guy Lombardo's, gets tired of this entertainment, too?

The commercialized Sunday afternoon jam sessions at the various New York clubs continues unabated. Evidently, they are proving to be financial successes, in spite of the criticism that has been directed against them from various sources. Out of curiosity, I attended one of these jams recently at the Famous Door. Reluctantly, I must admit, that in spite of the business-bating atmosphere, it was enjoyable. Once that feeling that the musicians were "going to work" was overcome, all went well. "Fats" Waller, Bessie Smith and Bunny Berigan did a swell job of their part of the jam.

Who hasn't heard *Christopher Columbus* by this time? Choo Berry wrote it for Fletcher Henderson. It's one of the finest swing pieces in years. None of the recording companies lost any time in getting it on discs. The best version on wax is Fletcher Henderson's own (with Choo himself) on Vocalion 3211. This recording is seven leagues ahead of anyone elses, not excepting Teddy Wilson's (Brunswick) and Benny Goodman's (Victor).

I'm Getting Sentimental Over You is so definitely associated with Tommy Dorsey that no one longer thinks of one without the other. And deservedly, because no one else has been able to play it with just that right touch of wistfulness and that ex-

actly right tempo in keeping with the mood. Tommy Dorsey's recording of this number on Victor 25236 is a classic in its own way. That gentle swing behind his pure trombone tone must be heard to be believed. This record is musically every bit as good as Tommy's earlier recording on Brunswick 6409 and it has the advantage of an up-to-date "Higher Fidelity" recording.

From England comes the news that the Crystalate Company has revived the Vocalion label for the purpose of building up a strictly swing catalog. Since Crystalate owns the right to release American Perfect and Melotone recordings, British swing fans are in for some interesting times.

From the same source comes information that an exceptionally good swing record has been issued in England which Americans should know about. Originally a French recording, it has been repressed under the Oriole label with number LV105. The titles: *Viper's Dream* and *Blue Drag*. The band: Freddie Taylor and His Swing Men from Harlem. The personnel: Freddie Taylor, trumpet; Charlie Johnson, trumpet; Fletcher Allen, tenor sax; Chester Lanier, alto; Sterling Conway, guitar; José Riestra, bass; William Diemer, drums, and John Ferrier, piano. The record is privately issued and available through Levy's, in London.

Another recommended disc is Pathé PA817: *All of Me* and *Stardust* by Willie Lewis and His Entertainers. Bennie Carter plays trumpet for both sides and the arrangements are obviously his.

Since the beginning of recording one of the most annoying practices has been the use of pseudonyms by various orchestras, usually to avoid legal complications. Except in rare instances where the style and tone of an orchestra were easily recognizable (for instance, Duke Ellington's) it usually takes a combination of Dick Tracy, Sherlock Holmes, and a Philadelphia lawyer complex to ferret out what orchestra is hiding behind a certain phony name. Sometimes the mystery adds a little zest to the swing fans' enjoyment, especially if he can recognize the tone or style of a favorite artist. But sometimes it is just plain annoying.

Duke Ellington and His Orchestra, for example, have appeared as the Harlem Footwarmers, Chicago Footwarmers, and Lonnie Johnson's Harlem Footwarmers under the Okeh label; as Joe Turner and His Memphis Men under the Columbia label, as the Memphis Hot Shots under the Velvet Tone label; as Sonny Greer and His Memphis Men under the Vocalion label; as the Washingtonians under the Harmony label; as the Louisiana Rhythmakers under the Perfect label and as Earl Jackson and His Musical Champions under the Melotone label. All these in addition to those recordings for Brunswick and Victor which have appeared under his own name.

For the benefit of those who have not yet discovered them for themselves, here are the true identities of some other orchestras which have been hiding under aliases: Stew Fletcher and Orchestra on Blue Bird is really Red Norvo and His Swing Octet; Ken Kenny and Orchestra on Champion is also Red Norvo and His Swing Octet; Ted Wallace and His Swing Kings on Blue Bird is Joe Haymes and His Orchestra; the Mound City Blue Blowers on Vocalion, Blue Bird, and Champion are Red McKenzie and Eddie Condon with their All Star Band; the Little Ramblers on Blue Bird are Adrian Rollini and the Tap Room Gang; the Harlem Hot Shots on Melotone are Wingy Mannone and His Orchestra; Mildred Bailey's Swing Band on Vocalion is a picked band featuring Teddy Wilson, Choo Berry and Roy Eldridge; the Six Blue Chips on Decca are Frank Signorelli, Pee Wee Irwin, and the nucleus of Wingy Mannone's Band with Stan King on traps; Krupa's All Star Swing Band on Victor is a combination of men picked from Benny Goodman's and Fletcher Henderson's Orchestras, including Benny Goodman and Gene Krupa; the Modernists on Melotone are Benny Goodman's Orchestra; the Red Heads on Perfect are Red Nichols and His Orchestra; the California Ramblers on Blue Bird are Adrian Rollini and His Tap Room Gang; Reginald Forsythe and His New Music on Columbia is Benny Goodman and His Orchestra; the Arkansas Travelers on Harmony are Red Nichols and His Orchestra; the Dixie Stompers on Harmony are Fletcher Henderson and His Orchestra; the Allen-Hawkins Orchestra on Melotone and Perfect is Fletcher Henderson's; Jack Bland's Rhythmakers on Okeh are Bennie Carter and His Orchestra; Earl Harlan and His Orchestra on Perfect is really Don Redman's; the Savannah Syncopators on Brunswick are King Oliver and His Orchestra; the New Orleans Lucky Seven on Okeh are Bix Biederbecke and His Orchestra; and the Delta Four on Decca are actually Roy Eldridge, Carmen Mastren, Joe Marsala and Sid Weiss.

(*Continued from Page* 27)

Vincitor does not equal her magnificent singing with Martinelli in the final scene, two discs from the early era of electrical recording that caught with memorable fidelity two of the greatest contemporary singers at a particularly inspired moment. It is a pleasure to toss fresh bouquets to Dusolina Giannini and Pertile for their *Fuggiam gli Ardori*, which, in company with the Ballet, Act II sextet, and Act IV duet (in which Minghini-Cattaneo is a superb Amneris, all of which was culled from the La Scala *Aida* set. Elisabeth Rethberg's *O Patria Mia*, from Berlin, can still retain its laurels. To complete this happy family is the lusty infant, the Boston "Pops" Orchestra's brilliant *Grand March*, that saw the light of day barely two months ago.

The sum total is certainly not a homogeneous *Aida*, but an exceptionally rich *pasticcio* that is crammed with many a fine plum.

—A. P. D.

* * * *

RENE: *Dusty Road*, and YOUMANS: *Through the Years;* sung by Nelson Eddy. Victor disc, No. 4313, 10-inch, price $1.00.

THIS month Nelson Eddy puts on a record two songs that his radio admirers should relish. *Dusty Road* is another of the numerous pseudo-negro songs where the darkey complains of his heavy afflictions, but as-

serts his natural optimism for a brighter future. A much better song is Vincent Youmans' popular ballad, *Through the Years*, which has an honest melody supported by a noticeably good accompaniment of dance band instrumentation. Mr. Eddy's voice quality and diction show up to better advantage here than in the more dramatic number on the other side of the disc.

—A. P. D.

* * * *

Bessarabiyanka (Bessarabian Folk-Song), and *Buran* (Russian Folk-Song); sung by Peter Lescenco, with Frank Fox's Orchestra. Columbia disc No. 4121-M, 10-inch, price $1.00.

THOSE who frequent Russian cabarets and restaurants will be familiar with the types of songs that Peter Lescenco arranges and sings for this record. The Bessarabian Woman starts with a whirl in the orchestra, composed chiefly of balaikas and violins; the voice never relents in the pace and high spirits. *Buran* (The Snow-storm) runs through a gamut of tempi as the tenor shows the humor of the text in mimicking mirthful cries. These songs have an irresistible gaiety quite unlike any American products.

—A. P. D.

* * * *

ESPABILATE—*Conga rumba* (from *La Virgen Morena*) and *Sous le Ciel d'Afrique* (from the French film *Princesse Tam-Tam*), sung by Josephine Baker and the Comedian Harmonists, with piano accompaniment. Columbia 4119-M, price $1.00.

IN a restrained mood Josephine Baker and the male Comedian Harmonists praise the pleasures, desires, caresses, and idleness that are assured to all under Africa's skies. In a trick, jazzy manner, with piano supported by brasses and rattles, the rhythmic singers, using their voices with instrumental effects, deliver a text that might be understood in French Equatorial Africa. *A hot number*, in three words.

—A. P. D.

RESPIGHI'S "PINES OF ROME" IN SPECIAL RELEASE

Victor have brought forward a special release of Respighi's *Pines of Rome*, played by the Paris Conservatory Orchestra, direction of Piero Coppola (their discs 11917-18). A survey of this recording will appear next month.

CORRESPONDENCE

(*Continued from Page* 15)

To turn to more pleasant things may I say how interesting your book reviews and correspondence columns were this month. Particularly did I enjoy your review of the Toscanini biography. But it may interest you to know that in Germany and Austria Toscanini's interpretations of the great German masters are by no means regarded as the last word. One of the greatest German critics once remarked in my hearing that "Toscanini's Beethoven is exciting but it is not the 'echt' Beethoven. We need Furtwaengler for that!" And if you will turn to the Allgemeine Musikzeitung of last May you will find some interesting notes on Toscanini as a Wagner conductor. Hence while we all agree that Toscanini is a very great conductor it is only fair to say that the compatriots of the great composers of classical music are by no means unanimous in regarding him as the perfect interpreter.

Mr. Douglas's letter was most interesting. I do not agree with one of his contentions however. He says it is absurd to expect all records for $1. Well in this country we have Polydor records with the pick of the Continent's stars at prices for 2/6 to 4/-. In addition these are the Decca records at 2/6 — many of them of real excellence. We do not expect the Decca records of the *Fifth Symphony* to be so well recorded at 10s. as the latest H. M. V. set at 30s. But it seems to me that no one set of records of such a masterpiece can ever hope to be the definitive interpretation and that it should be our aim to have two or three sets of each great symphony. Now to the average person like myself this is quite impossible without the aid of cheap sets like the Decca records which in reality are much better than some people have made them out to be. I was also glad to see Mr. Douglas stating the fact that Carnegie Hall and the Metropolitan are not the be all and the end all of musical life. To the artists he mentions might be added people like Wilhelm Kempff and Georg Kulenkampff who have made the best recordings of the *Kreutzer Sonata* that there is and many other artists to be found in the Polydor catalogue whose names are unknown except on records outside their native land.

I hope you will allow me to correct Mr. Benedict's views on the Mozart Society records. He calls them a haphazard performance by participants in a small town festival. Well it is true that Glyndbourne is a small town but then so is Salzburg and so is Bayreuth. As to the performances themselves it is well known in this country at least that no expense was spared to secure the most suitable artists. Dr. Fritz Busch, late of Dresden, who conducted, is famous for his powers as an operatic conductor. The performances were rehearsed with a thoroughness hitherto unknown, that in this country, apart from the Continental festivals, and every care was taken to see that the participants should be, perhaps not the most famous internationally of singers, but those who would best serve Mozart. That they succeeded was the view of all responsible critics over here. If Mr. Benedict cannot enjoy the records he is more to be condoled for his misfortune than anything else.

I again apologise for the length of this letter, but you really should not make your magazine so interesting!

With best wishes for your continuing success,

Yours faithfully,

D. W. A. DONALD.

March 28th, 1936.

(*Continued from Page* 17)

The 124th anniversary of the birth of Robert Browning will be observed on May 7, with the American radio premiere of the great poet's lyric-drama, "Pippa Passes." The program over the NBC Blue network at 4:30 p. m., EDST, will be a part of Browning observances on both sides of the Atlantic.

A radio adaptation of the immortal poem has been made by Eunice Howard, young NBC dramatic actress, for the Radio Guild. An original musical accompaniment by Elsa Leon has been especially arranged by Francis Pauly, composer and symphonic arranger for the Minneapolis symphony. Josef Stopak will conduct an ensemble made up of organ, strings and harp.

"Pippa Passes" was issued in a Browning volume called "Bells and Pomegranates" at about the same time as the poet's marriage to Elizabeth Barrett, in 1846, as the climax of the love saga of Wimpole Street. Milton J. Cross will act as narrator during the presentation of the drama, centering around a young silk winder in the Italian village of Asola. She goes forth with a song on her lips, to celebrate her first real holiday by rambling through towns and countryside. Her journey leads her past the homes of those she believes to be the happiest in the village. The psychological poetic drama tells of the actual passions and sorows, and how her passing affects the lives of each of the householders.

Goldman Band Concerts to Return

The famous Goldman Band Concerts, from New York City's parks, will be heard again this year over the nationwide networks of the National Broadcasting Company under the direction of Dr. Edwin Franko Goldman. This year will mark the sixteenth successive season of broadcasts bringing the famous open air concerts to the entire nation as well as to the people of the City of New York.

From the Central Park promenade, Dr. Goldman immortalized with his famous march *On the Mall*, the band will make its opening concert and broadcast on June 17. Several times each week from that date until August 16 the nationwide radio audience will share in the musical series which is a gift to the people of New York City from the Daniel and Florence Guggenheim Foundation.

David Sarnoff Official Opener of Music Week

David Sarnoff, president of the Radio Corporation of America, and chairman of the National Music Week Committee, will officially open National Music Week with the RCA Magic Key broadcast on Sunday, May 3, from 2:00 to 3:00 p. m., EDST, over the coast-to-coast NBC-Blue network. The matinee concert will be devoted to the aims and purposes of America's Spring music festival. Sarnoff will speak during the program, discussing National Music Week in general and the particular aims of this year's celebration.

Edgar Stillman Kelley's choral suite, *Alice in Wonderland*, a companion piece to his orchestral work of the same title, will be presented over the NBC-Red network on Wednesday, May 6, from 5:15 to 5:45 p. m., EDST, in observance of National Music Week. The suite will be sung by a chorus of 600 elementary school children from 40 rural districts of Jefferson County, Kentcky, under the direction of Miss Helen McBride, county supervisor of music. The program will be broadcast through the facilities of Station WAVE, NBC affiliate in Louisville, Kentucky.

●

Willard Robison, who is heard with his Deep River Orchestra over the WABC-Columbia network each Tuesday from 10:45 to 11:15 p. m., EDST, will pay tribute to National Music Week on the evening of May 5 by offering a program devoted entirely to the music of the American Negro. He will have as his guest W. C. Handy, prominent Negro composer ofter called "The Father of the Blues."

The orchestra will play Handy's seldom heard *Chantez la Bas*, a descriptive piece influenced by Creole life. His plantation melody, *Long Gone*, and a special arrangement of the famous *St. Louis Blues* will also be played.

William Grant Still, another leading composer and orchestrator in the contemporary field, will also supply material for this broadcast. His symphonic suite, *Africa*, excerpts from which have been performed by Paul Whiteman at Carnegie Hall, will be played.

"Music Is My Hobby"

Bach's famous *Concerto for Two Violins and String Orchestra*, performed by two New York business men and a string orchestra under the direction of Dr. Frank Black, NBC General Music Director, will be the feature of a special *Music Is My Hobby* program presented by the NBC Music Guild over the NBC-Red network on Wednesday, May 6, from 2:00 to 2:30 p. m., EDST. The program is being broadcast as one of the special National Music Week events scheduled by the National Broadcasting Company.

The two non-professional violinists who will be heard as soloists in this difficult work are Abram Menin, New York attorney and former Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and Louis J. Fink, life insurance expert.

Menin is the attorney who defended the famous *Eli, Eli* copyright infringement case some years ago. During the trial he attracted considerable attention by bringing his violin to court and performing the work as part of his argument. He is also a prominent member of the National Republican Club, and author of several books on legal subjects. Fink is known nationally in life insurance circles.

The regular Thursday evening *Music Is My Hobby* program, broadcast over the NBC-Blue network from 7:45 to 8:00 p. m., EDST, on May 7 will present Dr. Erdman Harris, Professor of Religious Education and Psychology at Union Theological Seminary in New York, whose hobby is playing popular music on the piano. Dr. Harris is also a non-professional composer. During his student days at Princeton University he wrote the music for two of the Triangle Club shows.

Our Radio Dial

Time Indicated is Eastern Daylight Saving Time

SUNDAY—

8:00 AM—Melody Hour (NBC-WEAF)
11:30 AM—Major Bowes' Capitol Family (NBC-WEAF)
11:30 AM—Samovar Serenade; Balalaika Orch. (NBC-WJZ)
12:00 AM—Salt Lake City Choir and Organ (CBS-WABC)
12:30 PM—Radio City Music Hall (NBC-WJZ)
2:00 PM—The French Trio (CBS-WABC)
2:30 PM—Sonata Recital — Brown and Rozsa (BBS-WOR)
3:00 PM—Everybody's Music — Howard Barlow (CBS-WABC)
3:45 PM—Perole String Quartet (BBS-WOR)
3:45 PM—Henri Deering, pianist (NBC-WJZ)
4:30 PM—Heifetz Russian Singers (CBS-WABC)
4:30 PM—Temple of Song; Chicago A Capella Choir (NBC-WEAF)
8:00 PM—Master Musicians (BBS-WOR)
9:00 PM—Detroit Symphony with Soloists (CBS-WABC)
10:00 PM—General Motors Concert (NBC-WEAF)
10:30 PM—Barclay's Community Singing CBS-WABC)

MONDAY—

2:30 PM—NBC Music Guild (NBC-WJZ)
2:30 PM—Waltz Favorites (NBC-WEAF)
4:00 PM—Concert Miniatures (CBS-WABC)
5:30 PM—James Wilkinson, baritone (NBC-WEAF)
6:05 PM—U. S. Army Band (NBC-WJZ)
8:30 PM—Nelson Eddy, Margaret Speaks (NBC-WEAF)
9:30 PM—String Sinfonia-Wallenstein (BBS-WOR)

TUESDAY—

11:45 AM—Piano Recital (NBC-WEAF)
1:45 PM—NBC Music Guild (NBC-WEAF)
2:05 PM—Concert Miniatures (CBS-WABC)
4:30 PM—Ivy Scott, soprano (NBC-WJZ)
4:30 PM—Chamber Orchestra (CBS-WABC)
6:35 PM—Alexander Cores, violinist (CBS-WABC)
9:00 PM—Symphonic Strings — Alfred Wallenstein (BBS-WOR)
9:30 PM—NBC String Symphony — Frank Black (NBC-WJZ)
10:45 PM—Williard Robinson — Deep River Orchestra (CBS-WABC)

WEDNESDAY—

11:30 AM—U. S. Army Band (NBC-WJZ)
12:45 PM—Jules Lande and his Concert Ensemble (NBC-WEAF)
2:00 PM—NBC Music Guild (NBC-WEAF)
2:30 PM—Rosa Lee, soprano (NBC-WEAF)
4:00 PM—Curtis Institute (CBS-WABC)
4:00 PM—E. Robert Schmitz, pianist (CBS-WABC)
4:45 PM—Clyde Barrie, baritone (CBS-WABC)
9:00 PM—Kostelanetz Orchestra with Soloists (CBS-WABC)
9:00 PM—NBC Concert Hour — Cesare Sodero (NBC-WJZ)
9:30 PM—Alfred Wallenstein's Sinfonietta (BBS-WOR)

THURSDAY—

10:05 AM—Alden Edkins, bass (NBC-WEAF)
11:30 AM—U. S. Navy Band (NBC-WJZ)
2:30 PM—NBC Music Guild (NBC-WJZ)
3:15 PM—Wright and Howells, piano duo (CBS-WABC)
5:15 PM—Clyde Barrie, baritone (CBS-WABC)
6:05 PM—James Wilkinson, baritone (NBC-WJZ)
7:45 PM—Music Is My Hobby (NBC-WJZ)
8:00 PM—Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (NBC-WJZ)
8:00 PM—Alex. Gray, baritone (CBS-WABC)
8:30 PM—Little Symphony Orchestra with Philip James (BBS-WOR)

FRIDAY—

11:00 AM—NBC Light Opera Co. (NBC-WEAF)
12:45 PM—Lande's Concert Ensemble (NBC-WEAF)
1:15 PM—Savitt Serenade (CBS-WABC)
3:00 PM—U. S. Marine Band (NBC-WJZ)
4:30 PM—U. S. Army Band (CBS-WABC)
5:30 PM—Terri La Franconi, tenor (NBC-WEAF)
8:00 PM—Cities Service Concert (NBC-WEAF)
10:00 PM—Kostelanetz Orch. with Soloists CBS-WABC)
10:15 PM—Cesare Sodero and Orchestra (BBS-WOR)

SATURDAY—

11:00 AM—Cincinnati Conservatory of Music (CBS-WABC)
12:00 AM—Concert Miniature (NBC-WEAF)
2:45 PM—Clyde Barrie, baritone (CBS-WABC)
7:30 PM—Hampton Institute Singers (NBC-WEAF)
8:00 PM—Henri Deering, pianist (NBC-WJZ)
8:30 PM—Boston Pops Concerts (NBC-WJZ)
9:00 PM—Bruna Castagna, contralto (CBS-WABC)

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